MOLLY BROWN'S SOPHOMORE DAYS

NELL SPEED

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BY

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AUTHOR OF "MOLLY BROWN'S FRESHMAN DAYS," ETC.

WITH FOUR HALF-TONE ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHARLES L. WRENN

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Molly Brown's Sophomore Days

CHAPTER I.

THE RETURN OF THE WANDERERS.

"I never thought I could be so glad to be anywhere except home," thought Molly Brown as she swung off the 'bus, and, seizing her suit case, ran into Queen's Cottage without so much as ringing the bell.

Two juniors whom Molly had known only by sight the year before and several freshmen had been in the Wellington omnibus; no one in whom she could confide her enthusiasm as the 'bus turned a bend in the road and Wellington's towers came into view.

"Molly! Molly!" cried a voice from somewhere in the upper regions of Queen's, and down three

flights of stairs rushed a wild figure, her fluffy light brown hair standing out all over her head and her voluminous kimono sailing behind her like the tail of a kite.

"Oh, Judy, it's good to see you again," cried Molly, and the two girls were instantly folded in each other's arms in a long, loving embrace.

"You remind me strongly of Meg Merriles," continued Molly, holding her friend off at arms' length and giving her a joyful little shake. "You look as if you had been running over the moors in the wind."

"You'd think I was a bit daffy if you could see my room," replied Julia Kean, who, those of you who have met her in an earlier story will recall, was nicknamed "Judy" by her friends. "I'm unpacking. It looks like the world in the era of chaos: mountains of clothes and islands of shoes and archipelagoes of hats all jumbled into a hopeless mass. But, never mind that now. Let's talk about each other. Come on upstairs. Your room's ready. I looked in half an hour ago. You've got new wall paper and a

fresh coat of paint. That's because you are one of Mrs. Markham's little pets."

"Really," cried Molly, delighted. "How charmed Nance will be. And I've brought some white dimity curtains with ruffled edges to hang at the windows. I made them last summer when it was ninety-eight in the shade. Where is Nance, by the way? And where are all the Queen's girls, and what new ones are here?"

"One at a time, Miss Brown," laughed Judy, following Molly up to the third story and into the large room shared by Molly and her friend, Nance Oldham.

"How sweet it's going to look," cried Molly, clasping her hands and gazing around her with all the ardor of a returned wanderer. "But where is Nance?"

Judy's face became very grave.

"Is it possible you haven't heard the news about Nance?" she said.

"Judy, what do you mean?" cried Molly, taking off her hat and running her fingers through her rumpled auburn hair, a trick she had when

she was excited and overwrought. "Now, tell me at once what has happened to Nance. How could you have kept it from me? Dear old Nance!"

Judy blew her nose violently.

"Why don't you answer me, Judy? Isn't Nance coming back? I haven't heard from her for weeks. Oh, do tell me."

"I'm going to tell you in a minute," answered Judy. "I can't blow my nose and talk at the same time. It's a physical impossibility. I've got a wretched cold, you see. I am afraid it's going into influenza."

"Julia Kean, you are keeping something from me. I don't care a rap about your nose. Isn't Nance coming back?"

Molly almost fell on her knees in the excess of her anxiety. Judy turned her face away from those appealing blue eyes and coughed a forced throaty cough.

"Suppose I should say she wasn't coming back, Molly? Would you mind it?"

"WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER ME, JUDY?"—*Page* 8.

"Would I mind it?" repeated Molly, her eyes filling with tears.

Suddenly the closet door was flung open and out rushed Nance.

"Oh, Molly, forgive me," she cried, throwing her arms around her roommate's neck. "Judy thought it would be a good practical joke, but I couldn't stand the deception any longer. It was worth it, though, if only to know you would miss me."

"Miss you?" exclaimed Molly. "I should think I would. Judy, you wretch!"

"I never did say she wasn't coming," replied Judy. "I simply said, 'Is it possible you haven't heard the news about Nance?' It shows how your heart rules your head, Molly. You shouldn't take on so until you get at the real truth. Your impetuous nature needs——"

Here Judy was interrupted by the noise of a headlong rush down the hall. Then the door was burst open and three girls blew into the room all laughing and talking at once.

"My goodness, it sounds like a stampede of

wild cattle," exclaimed Judy. "How are you, old pals?"

A general all-round embrace followed.

It was Margaret Wakefield, last year's class president; her chum, Jessie Lynch; and Sallie Marks, now a senior, but not in the least set up by her exalted state.

"Where's Mabel Hinton?" someone demanded.

"She's moved over to the Quadrangle into a singleton. She wanted to be nearer the scene of action, she said, and Queen's was too diverting for her serious life's work," so Margaret explained.

"I'm sorry," said Molly. "I'm one of those nice comfortable home bodies that likes the family to keep right on just the same forever, but I suppose we can't expect everybody to be as fond of this old brown house as we are. Sit down, everybody," she added, hospitably. "And —oh, yes, wait a moment—I didn't open this on the train at all."

She fell on her knees and opened her suit case while her friends exchanged knowing smiles.

"Ruling passion even strong in death," observed Judy.

"Of course it's something good to eat," laughed pretty Jessie.

"Of course," replied Molly, pitching articles of clothing out of her satchel with all the carelessness of one who pursues a single idea at a time. "And why not? My sister made them for me the morning I left and packed them carefully in a tin box with oiled paper."

"Cloudbursts!" they cried ecstatically and pounced on the box without ceremony, while Molly, who, like most good cooks, had a small appetite, leaned back in a Morris chair and regarded them with the pleased satisfaction of a host who has provided satisfactory refreshment for his guests.

The summer had made few changes in the faces of her last year's friends. Margaret was a bit taller and more massive, and her handsome face a little heavier. Already her youthful lines were maturing and she might easily have been mistaken for a senior.

Nance was as round and plump as a partridge and there was a new happiness in her face, the happiness of returning to the first place she had ever known that in any way resembled a home. Nance had lived in a boarding house ever since she could remember; but Queen's was not like a boarding house; at least not like the one to which she was accustomed, where the boarders consisted of two crusty old bachelors; a widow who was hipped about her health and always talked "symptoms"; a spinster who had taught school for thirty years; and Nance's parents—that is, one of them, and at intervals the other. Mrs. Oldham only returned to her family to rest between club conventions and lecture tours.

Judy had a beautiful creamy tan on her face which went admirably with her dreamy gray eyes and soft light brown hair. There were times when she looked much like a boy, and she did at this moment, Molly thought, with her hair parted on one side and a brilliant Roman scarf knotted around her rolling Byronic collar.

Jessie, just now engaged in the pleasing occu-

pation of smiling at her own image in the mirror over the mantel, was as pretty as ever. As for Sallie Marks, every familiar freckle was in its familiar place, and, as Judy remarked later, she had changed neither her spots nor her skin. She had merely added a pair of eye-glasses to her tip-tilted critical nose and there was, perhaps, an extra spark of dry humor in her pale eyes.

Molly was a little thin. She always "fell-off" after a ninety-eight-in-the-shade summer; but she was the same old Molly to her friends, possessed with an indescribable charm and sweetness: the "nameless charm," it had been called, but there were many who could name it as being a certain kindly gentleness and unselfishness.

"What's the news, girls?" she demanded, giving a general all-round smile like that of a famous orator, which seemed to be meant for everybody at once and no one in particular.

"News is scarce; or should I say 'are'?" replied Margaret. "Epiménides Antinous Green, 'the handsomest man ever seen,' was offered a chair in one of the big colleges and refused."

"But why?" cried Molly, round-eyed with amazement.

"Because he has more liberty at Wellington and more time to devote to his writings."

Molly walked over to the window to hide a smile.

"The comic opera," she thought.

"He's just published a book, you know, on the 'Elizabethan Drama,'" went on Margaret, "which is to be used as a text book in lots of private schools. And he's been on a walking trip through England this summer with George Theodore——"

"How did you know all that?" interrupted Judy.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I came up to Wellington on the train with Andy McLean and he answered all the questions I asked him," replied Margaret, laughing. "I also answered all the questions he asked me about a particular young lady——"

Nance pretended to be very busy at this moment with the contents of her work bag. The

other girls began laughing and she looked up, disclosing a scarlet countenance.

"Don't you know she never could take a teasing?" cried Judy.

"Who's teasing?" answered Margaret. "No names were mentioned."

"Don't you mind, Nance, dear," said Molly, always tender-hearted when it came to teasing. "The rest of us haven't had one 'inquiring friend,' as Ca'line, our cook, used to call them. When I wrote letters for her to her family in Georgia, she always finished up with 'Now, Miss Molly, jes' end with love to all inquirin' friends.'"

The dainty little French clock on the mantel, one of Nance's new possessions, tinkled five times in a subdued, fairy chime and the friends scattered to their various rooms to unpack. Judy was now in Frances Andrews' old room, next to the one occupied by Molly and Nance.

"I think I'll take a gimlet and bore a hole through the wall," she announced as she lingered a moment after the others had gone, "so that we can communicate without having to walk ten

steps—I counted them this morning—and open two doors."

"Who has your old room, Judy?" inquired Molly.

"You'd never guess in a thousand years, so I'll have to enlighten you," answered Judy. "A young Japanese lady."

"For heaven's sake!" cried Molly and Nance in one breath, while Judy, who loved a climax, sailed from the room without vouchsafing any more information.

CHAPTER II.

OTOYO.

Molly and Nance were very busy that night arranging their belongings. Molly's tastes were simple and Nance's were what might be called complicated. Molly had been reared all her life in large spaces, big, airy rooms, and broad halls, and the few pieces of heavy old mahogany in them were of the kind that cannot be bought for a song. Nance had been reared in an atmosphere of oiled walnut and boarding house bric-à-brac. She was learning because she had an exceedingly observing and intelligent mind, but she had not learned.

Therefore, that night, when Molly hung the white muslin curtains, and spread out the beautiful blue antique rug left by Frances Andrews, she devoutly hoped that Nance would "go easy" with the pictures and ornaments.

"What we want to try to do this year, Nance," she announced from the top of the step ladder, "is to keep things empty. We got fairly messy last winter after Christmas. I'm going to keep all those banners and things packed this year."

"Perhaps I'd better not get out those passe-partouted Gibson pictures," began Nance a little doubtfully.

"Just as you like, Nance, dear," said Molly.

She would rather have hung the wall with bill posters than have hurt her friend's feelings.

"Honestly, you aren't fond of them, are you?" asked Nance.

"Oh, it isn't that," apologized Molly. "But I think so many small pictures scattered over a big wall space are—well, rather tiring to the optic nerves."

Nance looked sad, but she had unbounded faith in Molly's opinions.

"What shall we do with this big empty wall space, then?" she asked, pausing in her unpacking to regard a sea of blue-gray cartridge paper with a critical eye.

At this juncture there came a light, timid tap, so faint, indeed, that it might have been the swish of a mouse's tail as he brushed past the door.

Molly paused in her contemplation of blank walls and listened.

"Did you hear anything, Nance?" she asked. "I thought I heard a tapping at our chamber door."

"Come in," called Nance briskly.

The door opened first a mere crack. Then the space widened and there stood on the threshold the diminutive figure of a little Japanese girl who by subsequent measurements proved to be exactly five feet one-half an inch in height. She was dressed "like white people," to quote Molly, that is, in a neat cloth suit and a straw turban, and her slanting black eyes were like highly polished pieces of ebony.

"I beg the honorable pardon of the young ladies," she began with a prim, funny accent. "I arrive this moment which have passing at the honorable home of young ladies. I not find no one save serving girl who have informing me

of room of sleeping in. Honorable lady of the house, her you calling 'matronly,' not in at present passing moment. I feeling little frighting. You will forgive poor Otoyo?"

With an almost superhuman effort Molly controlled her face and choked back the laughter that bubbled up irrepressibly. Nance had buried her head in her trunk until she could regain her composure.

"Indeed I do forgive you, poor dear. You must feel strange and lonely. Just wait until I get down from the ladder and I'll show you your bedroom. It used to be the room of one of my best friends, so I happen to know it very well."

Molly crawled down from the heights of the step ladder and took the little Japanese girl's brown hand in hers. "Shall we not shake hands and be friends?" she said. "We are such near neighbors. You are just down there at the end of the hall, you see. My name is Brown, Molly Brown, and this is my roommate, Nance Oldham."

"I with much pleasure feel to making acquain-

tance of beautiful young ladies," said the Japanese girl, smiling charmingly and showing two rows of teeth as pointed and white as a spaniel's.

Nance had also risen to the occasion by this time, and now shook Miss Otoyo Sen's hand with a great show of cordiality, to make up for her crimson face and mouth still unsteady with laughter. They conducted the Japanese girl to her room and turned on the lights. There were two new-looking American trunks in the room and two cases covered with matting and inscribed with mystic Japanese hieroglyphics. Wired to the cord wrapping was an express tag with "Miss O. Sen, Queen's Cottage, Wellington," written across it in plain handwriting.

"Oh," exclaimed Miss Otoyo, clasping her hands with timid pleasure, "my estates have unto this place arriving come."

Nance turned and rushed from the room and Molly opened the closet door.

"You can hang all your things in here," she said unsteadily, "and of course lay some of them in the bureau drawers. Better unpack to-night,

because to-morrow will be a busy day for you. It's the opening day, you know. If we can help you, don't hesitate to ask."

"I am with gratitude much filled up," said the little Japanese, making a low, ceremonious bow.

"Don't mention it," replied Molly, hastening back to her room.

She found Nance giving vent to noiseless laughter in the Morris chair. Tears were rolling down her cheeks and her face was purple with suppressed amusement. Molly often said that, when Nance did laugh, she was like the pig who died in clover. When he died, he died all over. When Nance succumbed to laughter, her entire being was given over to merriment.

"Wasn't it beautiful?" she exclaimed in a low voice. "Did you ever imagine such ludicrous English? It was all participles. How do you suppose she ever made the entrance examinations?"

"Oh, she's probably good enough at writing. It's just speaking that stumps her. But wasn't she killingly funny? When she said 'my estates

have unto this place arriving come,' I thought I should have to departing go along with you. But it would have been rude beyond words. What a dear little thing she is! I think I'll go over later and see how she is. America must be polite to her visitors."

But Japan, always beforehand in ceremonious politeness, was again ahead of America in this respect. Just before ten o'clock the mouse's tail once more brushed their door and Nance's sharp ears catching the faint sound, she called, "Come in."

Miss Otoyo Sen entered, this time less timidly, but with the same deprecating smile on her diminutive face.

"Begging honorable pardon of beautiful young ladies," she began, "will condescendingly to accept unworthy gift from Otoyo in gratitude of favors receiving?"

Then she produced a beautiful Japanese scroll at least four feet in length. In the background loomed up the snow-capped peak of the ever-present sacred mountain, Fujiyama, and the fore-

ground disclosed a pleasing combination of sky-blue waters dotted with picturesque little islands connected with graceful curving bridges, and here and there were cherry trees aglow with delicate pink blossoms.

"Oh, how perfectly sweet," exclaimed the girls, delighted.

"And just the place on this bare wall space!" continued Molly. "It's really a heaven-sent gift, Miss Sen, because we were wishing for something really beautiful to hang over that divan. But aren't you robbing yourself?"

"No, no. I beg you assurance. Otoyo have many suchly. It is nothing. Beautiful young ladies do honor by accepting humbly gift."

"Let's hang it at once," suggested Molly, "while the step ladder is yet with us. Queen's step ladder is so much in demand that it's very much like the snowfall in the river, 'a moment there, then gone forever.'"

The two girls moved the homely but coveted ladder across the room, and, with much careful shifting and after several suggestions timidly

made by Otoyo, finally hung up the scroll. It really glorified the whole room and made a framed lithograph of a tea-drinking lady in a boudoir costume and a kitten that trifled with a ball of yarn on the floor, Nance's possession, appear so commonplace that she shamefacedly removed it from its tack and put it back in her trunk, to Molly's secret relief.

"Won't you sit down and talk to us a few minutes?" asked Nance. "We still have a quarter of an hour before bed time."

Otoyo timidly took a seat on a corner of one of the divans. The girls could not help noticing another small package which she had not yet proffered for their acceptance. But she now placed it in Nance's hand.

"A little of what American lady call 'meat-sweet,'" she said apologetically. "It all way from Japan have coming. Will beautiful ladies accept so humbly gift?"

The box contained candied ginger and was much appreciated by young American ladies, the

humble giver of this delightful confection being far too shy to eat any of it herself.

By dint of some questioning, it came out that Otoyo's father was a merchant of Tokio. She had been sent to an American school in Japan for two years and had also studied under an English governess. She could read English perfectly and, strange to say, could write it fairly accurately, but, when it came to speaking it, she clung to her early participial-adverbial faults, although she trusted to overcome them in a very little while. She had several conditions to work off before Thanksgiving, but she was cheerful and her ambition was to be "beautiful American young lady."

She was, indeed, the most charming little doll-like creature the girls had ever seen, so unreal and different from themselves, that they could hardly credit her with the feelings and sensibilities of a human being. So correctly polite was she with such formal, stiff little manners that she seemed almost an automaton wound up to bow and nod at the proper moment. But Otoyo Sen

was a creature of feeling, as they were to find out before very long.

"Did many girls come down on the train with you to-night, Miss Sen?" asked Nance, by way of making conversation.

Several young ladies had come, Miss Sen replied in her best participial manner. All had been kind to Otoyo but one, who had frightened poor Japanese very, very much. One very kind American gentleman had been commissioned to bring little Japanese down from big city to University. He had look after her all day and brought her sandwiches. He friend of her father and most, most kindly. He had receiving letters from her honorable father to look after little Japanese girl.

Across the aisle from Otoyo had sat a "beeg young American lady, beeg as kindly young lady there with peenk hair," indicating Molly. The "beeg" young American lady, it seems, had great "beeg" eyes, so: Otoyo made two circles with her thumbs and forefingers to indicate size of young American lady's optics. She called Otoyo

"Yum-Yum" and she made to laugh at humble Japanese girl, but Otoyo could see that young American lady with beeg eyes feeling great anger toward little strange girl.

"But for what reason?" asked Molly, slipping her arm around Otoyo's plump waist. "How could she be unkind to sweet little Japanese stranger?"

"Young great-eyed lady laugh at me mostly and I very uncomfortably." She brought out the big word with proud effort.

"But how cruel! Why did she do it?" exclaimed Nance.

Here Otoyo gave a delicious melodious laugh for the first time that evening.

"She not like kindly gentlemanly friend to be attentionly to humble Japanese."

"What was the gentleman's name, Otoyo?" asked Molly; and somewhat to her surprise Otoyo, who, as they were to learn later, never forgot a name, came out patly with:

"Professor Edwin Green, kindly friend of honorable father."

"Did the young lady call him 'Cousin'?" asked Nance in the tone of one who knows what the answer will be beforehand.

"Yes," answered Otoyo Sen.

"The same old Judith Blount," laughed Molly.

And Nance recalled Judy's prophetic speech on the last day of college in June: "Can the le-o-pard change his spots?"

Then the first stroke of the tower clock began to chime the hour of ten and they promptly conducted Otoyo to her bedroom with the caution that all lights must be out at ten, a rule she followed thereafter with implicit obedience.

The next morning, Molly and Nance took Otoyo under their especial care. They introduced her to all the girls at Queen's, placed her between them at Chapel, showed her how to register and finally took her on a sight-seeing expedition.

It turned out that through Professor Green her room had been engaged since early the winter before. Why he should have chosen Queen's they hardly knew, since Otoyo appeared to have

plenty of money and might have lived in more expensive quarters. But Queen's he had selected, and that very evening he called on Mrs. Markham to see that his little charge was comfortably settled. Molly caught a glimpse of him as he followed the maid through the hall to Mrs. Markham's sitting room, and made him a polite bow. She felt somewhat in awe of the Professor of English Literature this winter, since she was to be in one of his classes, Lit. II, and was very fearful that he might consider her a perfect dunce. But Professor Green would not pass Molly with a bow. He paused at the door of the living room and held out his hand.

"I'm glad to see you back and looking so well," he said. "My sister asked to be remembered to you. I saw her only yesterday."

The Professor looked well, also. His brown eyes were as clear as two brown pools in the forest and there was a healthy glow on his face; but Molly could not help noticing that he was growing bald about the temples.

"Too bad he's so old," she thought, "because sometimes he's really handsome."

"I am commissioned," he continued, "to find a tutor for a young Japanese girl boarding here, and I wondered if you would like to undertake the work. She needs lessons in English chiefly, but she has several conditions to work off and it would be a steady position for anyone who has time to take it. Her father is a rich man and willing to pay more than the usual price if he can get someone specially interested who will take pains with his daughter's education."

"I'm willing to do all that," said Molly, "but it goes with the job, don't you think? I have no right to ask more than is usually asked."

"Oh, yes, you have," answered the Professor quickly. "What you can give her means everything to the child. She is naturally very timid and strange. If you are willing to give up several hours to her, say four times a week, I will arrange about salary with her father and the lessons may begin immediately."

It was impossible for Molly to disguise her

feelings of relief and joy at this windfall. Her lack of funds was, as usual, an ever-present shadow in the background of her mind, although, through some fine investments which Mrs. Brown had been able to make that summer, the Brown family hoped to be relieved by another year of the pressure of poverty.

CHAPTER III.

A CLASHING OF WITS.

Queen's Cottage seemed destined to shelter girls of interesting and unusual types.

"They always do flock together, you know," Miss Pomeroy had remarked to the President, as the two women sat talking in the President's office one day. The question had come up with the subject of the new Japanese student, the first of her nation ever to seek learning in the halls of Wellington.

"They do," said the President, "but whether it's the first comers actively persuading the next ones or whether it's a matter of unconscious attraction is hard to tell."

"In this case I understand it's a matter of very conscious attraction on one side and no persuasion on the other," replied Miss Pomeroy. "That charming overgrown girl from Kentucky, Miss

Brown, although she's as poor as a church mouse and last year even blacked boots to earn a little money, is one of the chief attractions, I think. But some of the other girls are quite remarkable. Margaret Wakefield lives there, you know. She makes as good a speech as her politician father. It will be interesting to watch her career if she only doesn't spoil everything by marrying."

The two spinsters looked at each other and laughed.

"She won't," answered the President. "She's much too ambitious."

"Then," went on Miss Pomeroy, "there's Julia Kean. She could do almost anything she wished, and like all such people she doesn't want to do anything. She hasn't a spark of ambition. It's Miss Brown who keeps her up to the mark. The girl was actually about to run away last winter just at mid-years. She lost her courage, I believe, and there was a remarkable scene, but she was induced to stay."

"Who are the other girls?" asked the President thoughtfully.

"One of them, you recall, is a daughter of the famous suffragette, Mrs. Anna Oldham. But I fancy the poor daughter has had quite enough of suffrage. The only other really interesting characters at Queen's, besides your Japanese, are two sophomores who roomed at Plympton's last year. They are the Williams sisters, Katherine and Edith, and they are remarkably bright. They work in a team, and I have not been able to discover which is the brighter of the two, although I had them to tea once or twice last year. One is talkative and the other is quiet, but I suspect the quiet one of doing a deal of thinking."

The two women enjoyed these occasional chats about Wellington students. They were accustomed to regard most of the classes as units rather than the members as individuals. Sometimes it was a colorless, uninteresting class with no special traits worthy of admiration. Sometimes it was a snobbish, purse-proud class, as in the case of the present juniors. And again, as with last year's seniors, it was a class of sterling qualities made up of big girls with fine

minds. Seldom did a class contain more than one or two brilliant members, often not one. The present sophomore class was one of those "freak" bodies which appear once in a life time. It was an unusually small class, there being only thirty-eight members. Some twenty of these girls were extremely bright and at least ten gave promise of something more than ordinary. As the fastest skaters keep together on the ice, so the brightest girls gradually drifted into Queen's and became as one family. It was known that there was a good deal of jealousy in the less distinguished portion of the class because of this sparkling group. But, all unconscious of the feeling they were exciting, the Queen's girls settled themselves down to the enjoyment of life, each in her own peculiar way.

The two new sophomores at Queen's were, in fact, a welcome addition, and Molly and her friends found them exceedingly amusing. They were tall, rather raw-boned types, with sallow skins and large, lustrous, melancholy eyes. There was only a year's difference in their ages,

and at first it was difficult to tell one from the other, but Edith, the younger of the sisters, was an inch taller than Katherine and was very quiet, while Katherine talked enough for the two of them. Because they were always together they were called "the Gemini," although occasionally they had terrific battles and ceased to be on speaking terms for a day or two.

One afternoon, not long after the opening day at college, the Williams sisters and Mabel Hinton, who now lived in the Quadrangle, paid a visit to Molly in her room.

"We came in to discuss with you who you consider would make the best class president this year, Molly," began Katherine. "It's rather hard to choose one among so many who could fill the place with distinction——"

"But I think Margaret should be chosen," interrupted Molly. "She was a good one last year. Why change?"

"Don't you think it looks rather like favoritism?" put in Mabel. "Some of the other girls should have a chance. There's you, for instance."

"Me?" cried Molly. "Why, I wouldn't know how to act in a president's chair. I'd be embarrassed to death."

"You'd soon learn," said Katherine. "It's very easy to become accustomed to an exalted state."

"But why not one of you?" began Molly.

"It's a question," here remarked the silent Edith, "whether a class president should be the most popular girl or the best executive."

"Margaret is both," exclaimed Molly loyally; "but, after all, why not leave it to the vote at the class meeting?"

"Oh, it will be finally decided in that way, of course," said Katherine, "but such things are really decided beforehand by a little electioneering, and I was proposing to do some stump speaking in your behalf, Molly, if you cared to take the place."

"Oh, no," cried Molly, flushing with embarrassment; "it's awfully nice of you, but I wouldn't for anything interfere with Margaret. She is the one to have it. Besides, as Queen's

girls, we ought to vote for her. She belongs to the family."

"But some of the girls are kicking. They say we are running the class, and are sure to ring in one of our own crowd just to have things our way."

"How absurd!" ejaculated Molly. "I'm sure I never thought of such a thing. But if that's the case, why vote for me, then?"

"Because," replied Mabel, "the Caroline Brinton faction proposed you. They say, if they must have a Queen's girl, they'll take you."

"'Must' is a ridiculous word to use at an honest election," broke in Molly hotly. "Let them choose their candidate and vote as they like. We'll choose ours and vote as we like."

"That's exactly the point," said Katherine. "They are something like Kipling's monkey tribe, the 'banderlog.' They do a lot of chattering, but they can't come to any agreement. They need a head, and I propose to be that head and tell them whom to vote for. Shall it be Molly or Margaret?"

"Margaret," cried Molly; "a thousand times, Margaret. I wouldn't usurp her place for worlds. She's perfectly equipped in every possible way for the position."

Nance and Judy now came into the room. Nance looked a little excited and Judy was red in the face.

"Do you know," burst out the impetuous Judy, "that Caroline Brinton has called a mass meeting of all the sophomores not at Queen's? She has started up some cock-and-bull tale about the Queen's girls trying to run the class. She says we're a ring of politicians. We ran in all our officers last year and we're going to try and do it this year."

"What a ridiculous notion," laughed Molly. "Margaret was elected by her own silver-tongued oratory, and Jessie was made secretary because she was so pretty and popular and seemed to belong next to Margaret anyway."

"But the question is: are the Queen's girls going to sit back and let themselves be libeled?" demanded Nance.

Here Edith spoke up.

"Of course," she said, "let them talk. Don't you know that people who denounce weaken their own cause always, and it's the people who keep still who have all the strength on their side? Let them talk and at the class meeting to-morrow some of us might say a few quiet words to the point."

The girls recognized the wisdom of this decision and concluded to keep well away from any forced meeting of sophomores that evening. It had not occurred to simple-hearted Molly that it was jealousy that had fanned the flame of indignation against Queen's girls, but it had occurred to some of the others, the Williamses in particular, who were very shrewd in regard to human nature. As for Margaret Wakefield, she was openly and shamelessly enjoying the fight.

"Let them talk," she said. "To-morrow we'll have some fun. Just because they have made such unjust accusations against us they ought to be punished by being made to vote for us."

It was noted that Margaret used the word

"us" in speaking of future votes. She had been too well-bred to declare herself openly as candidate for the place of class president, but it was generally known that she would not be displeased to become the successful candidate. The next morning they heard that only ten sophomores attended the mass meeting and that they had all talked at once.

Later in the day when the class met to elect its president for the year, as Edith remarked: "The hoi polloi did look black and threatening."

Molly felt decidedly uncomfortable and out of it. She didn't know how to make a speech for one thing and she hoped they'd leave her alone. It was utterly untrue about Queen's girls. The cleverest girls in the class happened to live there. That was all.

Margaret, the Williamses and Judy wore what might be called "pugilistic smiles." They intended to have a sweet revenge for the things that had been said about them and on the whole they were enjoying themselves immensely. They had not

taken Molly into their confidence, but what they intended to do was well planned beforehand.

Former President Margaret occupied the chair and opened the meeting with a charming little speech that would have done credit to the wiliest politician. She moved her hearers by her reference to class feeling and their ambition to make the class the most notable that ever graduated from Wellington. She flattered and cajoled them and put them in such a good humor with themselves that there was wild applause when she finished and the Brinton forces sheepishly avoided each other's eyes.

There was a long pause after this. Evidently the opposing side did not feel capable of competing with so much oratory as that. Margaret rose again.

"Since no one seems to have anything to say," she said, "I beg to start the election by nominating Miss Caroline Brinton of Philadelphia for our next class president."

If a bomb shell had burst in the room, there couldn't have been more surprise. Molly could

have laughed aloud at the rebellious and fractious young woman from Philadelphia, who sat embarrassed and tongue-tied, unable to say a word.

Again there was a long pause. The Brinton forces appeared incapable of expressing themselves.

"I second the nomination of Miss Brinton," called Judy, with a bland, innocent look in her gray eyes.

Then Katherine Williams arose and delivered a deliciously humorous and delightful little speech that caused laughter to ripple all over the room. She ended by nominating Margaret Wakefield for re-election and before they knew it everybody in the room was applauding.

Nominations for other officers were made after this and a girl from Montana was heard to remark:

"I'm for Queen's. They're a long sight brighter than any of us."

When the candidates stood lined up on the platform just before the votes were cast, Caroline

Brinton looked shriveled and dried up beside the ample proportions of Margaret Wakefield, who beamed handsomely on her classmates and smiled so charmingly that in comparison there appeared to be no two ways about it.

"She's the right one for president," Judy heard a girl say. "She looks like a queen bee beside little Carrie Brinton. And nobody could say she ran the election this time, either. Carrie has had the chance she wanted."

Molly was one of the nominees for secretary and, standing beside a nominee from the opposing side, she also shone in comparison.

When the votes were counted, it was found that Margaret and Molly had each won by a large majority, and Caroline Brinton was ignominiously defeated.

That night Jessie Lynch, who had not in the least minded being superseded as secretary by Molly, gave a supper party in honor of her chum's re-election. Only Queen's girls were there, except Mabel Hinton, and there was a good deal

of fun at the expense of Caroline Brinton of Philadelphia.

"Poor thing," said Molly, "I couldn't help feeling sorry for her."

"But why?" demanded Katherine. "She had the chance she wanted. She was nominated, but she was such a poor leader that her own forces wouldn't stand by her at the crucial moment. Oh, but it was rich! What a lesson! And how charming Margaret was! How courteous and polite through it all. What a beautiful way to treat an enemy!"

"What a beautiful way to treat wrath, you mean," said her sister; "with 'a soft answer.'"

"It was as good as a play," laughed Judy. "I never enjoyed myself more in all my life."

But, somehow, Molly felt a little uncomfortable always when she recalled that election, although it was an honest, straightforward election, won by the force of oratory and personality, and so skillfully that the opposing side never knew it had been duped by a prearranged plan of four extremely clever young women.

CHAPTER IV.

A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT.

"Do you think those little feet of yours will be able to carry you so far, Otoyo?" asked Molly anxiously, one Saturday morning.

Otoyo gave one of her delightfully ingenuous smiles.

"My body is smally, too," she said. "The weight is not grandly."

"Not smally; just small, Otoyo," admonished Molly, who was now well launched in her tutoring of the little Japanese, and had almost broken her of her participial habits. But the adverbial habit appeared to grow as the participial habit vanished.

"And you won't get too tired?" asked Judy.

"No, no, no," protested Otoyo, her voice rising with each no until it ended in a sweet high note like a bird's. "You not know the Japanese when

you say that. I have received training. You have heard of jiu jitsu? Some day Otoyo will teach beautiful young American lady some things."

"Yes, but the jiu jitsu doesn't help you when you're tired, does it?"

"Ah, but I shall not be tired. You will see. Otoyo's feet great bigly."

She stuck out her funny stubby little feet for inspection and the girls all laughed. As a matter of fact, she was a sturdy little body and knew the secret of keeping her strength. She achieved marvels in her studies; was up with the dawn and the last person in the house to tumble into bed, but she was never tired, never cross and out of humor, and was always a model of cheerful politeness.

"Art ready?" asked Katherine Williams, appearing at the door in a natty brown corduroy walking suit.

"Can'st have the face to ask the question when we've been waiting for you ten minutes?" replied Judy.

It was a glorious September day when the walking club from Queen's started on its first expedition. The rules of the club were few, very elastic and susceptible to changes. It met when it could, walked until it was tired and had no fixed object except that of resting the eyes from the printed page, relaxing the mind from its arduous labors and accelerating the circulation. Anyone who wanted to invite a guest could, and those who wished to remain at home were not bound to go.

"Did anybody decide where we were going?" asked Molly.

"Yes, I did," announced Margaret. "Knob Ledge is our destination. It's the highest point in Wellington County and commands a most wonderful view of the surrounding country-side——"

"Dear me, you sound like a guide book, Margaret," put in Judy.

"Professor Green is the guide book," answered Margaret. "He told me about it. You know he is the only real walker at Wellington. Twenty

miles is nothing to him and Knob Ledge is one of his favorite trips."

"I hope that isn't twenty miles," said Jessie anxiously.

"Oh, no, it's barely six by the short way and ten by the road. We shall go by the short way."

"Isn't Molly lovely to-day?" whispered Nance to Judy, after the walking expedition had crossed the campus and started on its way in good earnest.

Molly was a picture in an old gray skirt and a long sweater and tam of "Wellington blue," knitted by one of her devoted sisters during the summer.

"She's a dream," exclaimed Judy with loyal enthusiasm. "She glorifies everything she wears. Just an ordinary blue tam o'shanter, exactly the same shape and color that a hundred other Wellington girls wear, looks like a halo on a saint's head when she wears it."

"It's her auburn hair that's the halo," said Nance.

"And her heavenly blue eyes that are saint's eyes," finished Judy.

Molly, all unconscious of the admiration of her friends, walked steadily along between Otoyo and Jessie, a package of sandwiches in one hand and a long staff, picked up on the road, in the other.

They were not exactly out for adventure that day, being simply a jolly party of girls off in the woods to enjoy the last sunny days in September, and they were not prepared for all the excitements which greeted them on the way.

Scarcely had they left the path along the bank of the lake and skirted the foot of "Round Head," at the top of which Molly and her two chums had once met Professor Green and his brother, when Margaret Wakefield, well in advance of the others, gave a wild scream and rushed madly back into their midst. Trotting sedately after her came an amiable looking cow. The creature paused when she saw the girls, emitted the bovine call of the cow-mother separated from her only child, turned and trotted slowly back.

"Why, Margaret, I didn't know you were such a coward," began Jessie reproachfully.

"Coward, indeed," answered the other indignantly. "I don't believe Queen Boadicea herself in a red sweater would have passed that animal. Listen to the creature. She's begun mooing like a foghorn. I suppose she held me personally responsible for her loss. Anyhow, she began chasing me and I wasn't going to be gored to death in the flower of my youth."

There was no arguing this fact, and several daring spirits, creeping along the path until it curved around the hill, hid behind a clump of trees and took in the prospect. There stood the cow with ears erect and quivering nostrils. She had a suspicious look in her lustrous eyes and at intervals she let out a deep bellow that had a hint of disaster in it for all who passed that way.

The brave spirits went back again.

"What are we to do?" exclaimed Katherine. "If it got out in college that an old cow kept ten sophomores from having a picnic, we'd never hear the last of it."

"Unless we behave like Indian scouts and creep along one at a time, I don't see what we are to do," said Molly. "If we went further up the hill, she'd see us just the same and if we crossed the brook and took to the meadow, we'd get stuck in the swamp."

"Suppose we make a run for it," suggested Judy with high courage. "Just dash past until we reach that group of trees over there."

"Not me," exclaimed Jessie, shaking her head vigorously. "Excuse me, if you please."

There was another conference in low voices behind the protecting clump of alder bushes. At last the cow began to ease her mental suffering by nibbling at the damp green turf on the bank of the little brook.

"She's forgotten all about us. Let's make a break for it," cried Molly. There was a certain stubbornness in her nature that made her want to finish anything she began no matter whether it was a task or a pleasure.

The cow flicked a fly from her flank with her tail and went on placidly cropping grass. Ap-

parently, creature comforts had restored her equanimity.

"One, two, three, run!" shouted Judy, and the ten students began the race of their lives.

Not once did the flower and wit of 19— pause to look back, and so closely did they stick together, the strong helping the weak, that to the watchers on the hill—and, alas! there were several of them—they resembled all together an enormous animal of the imagination with ten pairs of legs and a coat of many colors. At last they fell down, one on top of the other, in a laughing, tumbling heap, in the protecting grove of pine trees, and pausing to look back beheld the ferocious cow amiably swishing her tail as she cropped the luscious turf on the bank of the little stream.

"Asinine old thing," cried Margaret. "She's just an alarmist of the worst kind."

"Who was the alarmist, did you say, Margaret?" asked Edith, with a wicked smile. But Margaret made no answer, because, as her close

friends well knew, she never could stand being teased.

And now the watchers on the hill, having witnessed the entire episode from behind a granite boulder and enjoyed it to the limit of their natures, proceeded to return to Wellington with the story that was too good to keep, and Queen's girls went on their way rejoicing as the strong man who runs a race and wins.

At two o'clock, after a long, hard climb, they reached the ledges. To Molly and Judy, the leading spirits of the expedition, the beautiful view amply repaid their efforts, but there were those who were too weary to enjoy the scenery. Jessie was one of these.

"I'm not meant for hard work," she groaned, as she reposed on one of the flat rocks which gave the place its name and pillowed her head on Margaret's lap.

They opened the packages of luncheon and ate with ravenous appetites, finishing off with fudge and cheese sticks. Then they spread themselves on the table rocks and regarded the scenery pen-

sively. Having climbed up at great expense of strength and effort, it was now necessary to retrace their footsteps. The thought was disconcerting.

Edith, who never moved without a book, pulled a small edition of Keats from her pocket and began to read aloud:

"My heart aches and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk—"

A short laugh interrupted this scene of intellectual repose. Edith paused and looked up, annoyed.

"I see nothing to laugh at," she said. But the faces of her classmates were quite serious.

"No one laughed," said Molly.

"A rudely person did laugh," announced Otoyo decisively. "But not of us. Another hidden behind the rock."

The girls looked around them uneasily. There was no one in sight, apparently, and yet there had been a laugh from somewhere close by. Coming to think of it, they had all heard it.

"I think we'd better be going," said Margaret, rising hastily. "We can see the view on the other side some other day."

Twice that day Margaret, the coming suffragette, had proved herself lacking in a certain courage generally attributed to the new and independent woman.

"Come on," she continued, irritably. "Don't stop to gather up those sandwiches. We must hurry."

Perhaps they were all of them a little frightened, but nobody was quite so openly and shamelessly scared as President Wakefield. They had seized their sweaters and were about to follow her down the steep path, when another laugh was heard, and suddenly a strange man rushed from behind one of the large boulders and seized Margaret by the arm.

The President gave one long, despairing shriek that waked the echoes, while the other girls, too frightened to move, crouched together in a trembling group.

Then the little Japanese bounded from their

midst with the most surprising agility, seized the man by his thumb and with a lightning movement of the arm struck him under the chin.

With a cry of intense pain, the tramp, for such he appeared to be, fell back against the rock, his black slouch hat fell off, and a quantity of dark hair tumbled down on his shoulders. Judith Blount, looking exceedingly ludicrous in a heavy black mustache, stood before them.

"Oh, how you hurt me," she cried, turning angrily on Otoyo.

Otoyo shrank back in amazement.

"Pardon," she said timidly. "I did not know the rudely man was a woman."

The girls were now treated to the rare spectacle of Margaret Wakefield in a rage. The Goddess of War herself could not have been more majestic in her anger, and her choice of words was wonderful as she emptied the vials of her wrath on the head of the luckless Judith. The Williams sisters sat down on a rock, prepared to enjoy the splendid exhibition and the discomfiture of Judith Blount, who for once had gone

too far in her practical joking. Molly withdrew somewhat from the scene. Anger always frightened her, but she felt that Margaret was quite justified in what she said.

"How dare you masquerade in those disreputable clothes and frighten us?" Margaret thundered out. "Do you think such behavior will be tolerated for a moment at a college of the standing of Wellington University? Are you aware that some of us might have been seriously injured by what you would call, I suppose, a practical joke? Is this your idea of amusement? It is not mine. Do you get any enjoyment from such a farce?"

At last Margaret paused for breath, but for once Judith had nothing to say. She hung her head shamefacedly and the girls who were with her, whoever they were, hung back as if they would feign have their share in the affair kept secret.

"I'm sorry," said Judith with unusual humility. "I didn't realize it was going to frighten you so much. You see, I don't look much like

a man in my gymnasium suit. Of course the mackintosh and hat did look rather realistic, I'll admit. When we saw you run from the cow this morning, it was so perfectly ludicrous, we decided to have some fun. I put on these togs and we got a vehicle and drove around by the Exmoor road. I'm sorry if you were scared, but I think I came out the worst. My thumb is sprained and I know my neck will be black and blue by to-morrow."

"I advise you to give up playing practical jokes hereafter," said the unrelenting Goddess of War. "If your thumb is sprained, it's your own fault."

Judith flashed a black glance at her.

"When I lower myself to make you an apology," she ejaculated, "I should think you'd have the courtesy to accept it," and with that she walked swiftly around the edge of the rock, where she joined her confederates, while the Queen's girls demurely took their way down the side of the hill.

"Was my deed wrongly, then?" asked Otoyo,

innocently, feeling somehow that she had been the cause of the great outburst.

"No, indeed, child, your deed was rightly," laughed Margaret. "And I'm going to take jiu jitsu lessons from you right away. If I could twirl a robber around the thumb like that and hit a cow under her chin, I don't think I'd be such a coward."

Everybody burst out laughing and Molly felt greatly relieved that harmony was once more established. The walk ended happily, and by the time they had reached home, Judith Blount had been relegated to an unimportant place in their minds.

CHAPTER V.

AN UNWILLING EAVESDROPPER.

Busy days followed for Molly. She had been made chairman of the committee on decoration for the sophomore-freshman reception along with all her many other duties, and had entered into it as conscientiously as she went into everything. Some days before the semi-official party for the gathering of autumn foliage and evergreens, Chairman Molly and Judy had a consultation.

"What we want is something different," Judy remarked, and Molly smiled, remembering that her friend's greatest fear in life was to appear commonplace.

"Caroline Brinton will want cheese cloth, of course," said Molly, "but I think she'll be outvoted if we can only talk to the committee beforehand. My plan is to mass all the greens

around the pillars and hang strings of Japanese lanterns between the galleries."

"And," went on fanciful Judy, who adored decoration, "let's make a big primrose and violet banner exactly the same size as the Wellington banner and hang them from the center of the gymnasium, one on each side of the chandelier."

A meeting of the class was called to consider the question of the banner and it was decided not only to have the largest class banner ever seen at Wellington, but to give the entire class a hand in the making of it. The money was to be raised partly by subscription and partly by an entertainment to be given later.

The girls were very proud of the gorgeous pennant when it was completed. Every sophomore had lent a helping hand in its construction, which had taken several hours a day for the better part of a week. It was of silk, one side lavender and the other side primrose color. On the lavender side "WELLINGTON" in yellow silk letters had been briar-stitched on by two skillful

sophomores and on the primrose side was "19—" in lavender.

The Wellington banner, a gift from the alumnae, was also of silk in the soft blue which every Wellington girl loved. It was necessary to obtain a special permission from President Walker to use this flag, which was brought out only on state occasions, and it devolved on Molly, as chairman, to make the formal request for her class. That this intrepid class of sophomores was the first ever to ask to use the banner had not occurred to her when she knocked at the door of the President's office.

Miss Walker would see her in ten minutes, she was told by Miss Maxwell, the President's secretary, and she sat down in the long drawing room to await her summons. It was a pleasant place in which to linger, Molly thought, as she leaned back in a beautiful old arm chair of the sixteenth century, which had come from a Florentine palace. Most of the furniture and ornaments in the room had been brought over from Italy by Miss Walker at various times. There

were mirrors and high-backed carved chairs from Venice. Over the mantel was a beautiful frieze of singing children, and at one side was a photograph, larger even than Mary Stewart's, of the "Primavera"; on the other side of the mantel was a lovely round Madonna which Molly thought also might be a Botticelli.

As her eyes wandered from one object to another in the charming room, her tense nerves began to relax. At last her gaze rested on the photograph of a pretty, dark-haired girl in an old-fashioned black dress. There was something very appealing about the sweet face looking out from the carved gilt frame, a certain peaceful calmness in her expression. And peace had not been infused into Molly's daily life lately. What a rush things had been in; every moment of the day occupied. There were times when it was so overwhelming, this college life, that she felt she could not breast the great wave of duties and pleasures that surged about her. And now, at last, in the subdued soft light of President Walker's drawing room she found herself alone

and in delightful, perfect stillness. How polished the floors were! They were like dim mirrors in which the soft colors of old hangings were reflected. Two Venetian glass vases on the mantel gave out an opalescent gleam in the twilight.

"Some day I shall have a room like this," Molly thought, closing her eyes. "I shall wear peacock blue and old rose dresses like the Florentine ladies and do my hair in a gold net——"

Her heavy eyelids fluttered and drooped, her hands slipped from the arms of her chair into her lap and her breathing came regularly and even like a child's. She was sound asleep, and while she slept Miss Maxwell peeped into the room. Seeing no one, apparently, in the dim light, she went out again. Evidently the sophomore had not waited, she decided, so she said nothing to Miss Walker about it.

Half an hour slipped noiselessly by; the sun set. For a few minutes the western window reflected a deep crimson light; then the shadows deepened and the room was almost dark.

"Never mind the lights, Mary. I'll see Miss Walker in her office at five thirty," said a voice at the door. "She expects me and I'll wait here until it's time."

"Very well, sir," answered the maid.

Someone came softly into the room and sat down near the window, well removed from the sleeping Molly. Again the stillness was unbroken and the young girl, sitting in the antique chair in which noble lords and ladies and perhaps cardinals and archbishops had sat, began to dream. She thought the dark-haired girl in the photograph was standing beside her. She wore a long, straight, black dress that seemed to fade off into the shadows. Molly remembered the face perfectly. There was a sorrowful look on it now. Then suddenly the sadness changed inexplicably and the face was the face in the photograph, the peaceful calmness returned and the eyes looked straight into Molly's, as they did from the picture.

Molly started slightly and opened her eyes.

"I must have been asleep," she thought.

"My dear Edwin," Miss Walker's voice was saying, "this is terrible. I am so shocked and sorry. What's to be done?"

"I don't know. I haven't been able to think yet, it was all so sudden. I had just heard when I telephoned you half an hour ago. It's a great blow to the family. Grace is with them now, and she's a tower of strength, you know."

"What's to be done about Judith? She was getting on so well this year. I think her punishment last winter did her good."

"She did appear to be in a better frame of mind," said Professor Green drily.

"Is she to be told at once?"

"She has to be told about the money, of course, but the disgraceful part is to be kept from her as much as possible."

Molly's heart began to beat. What should she do? Make her presence known to Professor Green and Miss Walker? But how very embarrassing that would be, to break suddenly into this intimate conversation and confess that she had overheard a family secret.

"The thing has been kept quiet so far," went on the Professor. "The newspapers, strange to say, have not got hold of it, but it's going to take every cent the family can get together to pull out of the hole. Hardly half a dozen persons outside the family know the real state of the case. I have taken you into my confidence because you are an old and intimate friend of the family and because we must reach some decision about Judith. Her mother wants her to stay right where she is now, just as if nothing had happened. Judith has always been very proud and her mother thinks it would be too much of a come-down for her to live in cheaper quarters."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Miss Walker. "On the contrary, I think it would do Judith good to associate with girls who are not so well off. Put her with a group of clever, hard-working girls like the ones at Queen's, for instance."

Molly's heart gave a leap. How much she would like to tell the girls this compliment the President had paid them! Then again the embarrassment of her position overwhelmed her.

She was about to force herself to rise and confess that she had been an unwitting eavesdropper when she heard the Professor's voice from the door saying:

"Well, you advise me to do nothing this evening? Richard is going to call me up again in an hour on the long distance in the village for the sake of privacy. If he agrees with you, I'll wait until to-morrow."

"Where's Mr. Blount now?"

"They think he's on his way to South America. You see, Richard, in some way, found out about the fake mining deal and the family is trying to get together enough money to pay back the stockholders. There are not many local people involved. Most of it was sold in the West and South and we hope to refund all the money in the course of time. It's nearly half a million, you know, and while the Blounts have a good deal of real estate, it takes time to raise money on it."

"What did you say the name of the mine was? I have heard, but it has slipped my memory."

"'The Square Deal Mine'; a bad name, considering it was about the crookedest deal ever perpetrated."

Molly started so violently that the Venetian vases on the mantel quivered and the little table on which stood the picture in the gilt frame trembled like an aspen.

"The Square Deal Mine!" Had she heard anything else but that name all summer? Had not her mother, on the advice of an old friend, invested every cent she could rake and scrape together, except the fund for her own college expenses, in that very mine? And everybody in the neighborhood had done the same thing.

"It's a sure thing, Mrs. Brown," Colonel Gray had told her mother. "I'm going to put in all I have because an old friend at the head of one of the oldest and most reliable firms in the country is backing it."

The voices grew muffled as the President and Professor Green moved slowly down the hall. Molly felt ill and tired. Would the Blounts be able to pay back the money? Suppose they were

not and she had to leave college while Judith was to be allowed to finish her education and live in the most expensive rooms in Wellington.

She pressed her lips together. Such thoughts were unworthy of her and she tried to brush them out of her mind.

"Poor Judith!" she said to herself.

The President's footsteps sounded on the stairs. She paused on the landing, cleared her throat and mounted the second flight.

How dark it had grown. A feeling of sickening fear came over Molly, and suddenly she rushed blindly into the hall and out of the house without once looking behind her. Down the steps she flew, and, in her headlong flight, collided with Professor Green, who had evidently started to go in one direction and, changing his mind, turned to go toward the village.

"Why, Miss Brown, has anything frightened you? You are trembling like a leaf."

"I—I was only hurrying," she replied lamely.

"Have you been to see the President?"

"I didn't see her. It was too late," answered Molly evasively.

They walked on in silence for a moment.

"I am going down to the village for a long-distance message. May I see you to your door on my way?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said Molly, half inclined to confide to the Professor that she had just overheard his conversation. But a kind of shyness closed her lips. They began talking of other things, chiefly of the little Japanese, Molly's pupil.

At the door of Queen's, the Professor took her hand and looked down at her kindly.

"You were frightened at something," he said, smiling gravely. "Confess, now, were you not?"

"There was nothing to frighten me," she answered. "Did you ever see a picture," she continued irrelevantly, "a photograph in a gilt frame on a little table in the President's drawing room? It's a picture of a slender girl in an old-fashioned black dress. Her hair is dark and her face is rather pale-looking."

"Oh, yes. That's a photograph of Miss Elaine Walker, President Walker's sister."

"Where is she now?" asked Molly.

"She died in that house some twenty-five years ago. You know, Miss Walker succeeded her father as President and they have always lived there. Miss Elaine was in her senior year when she had typhoid fever and died. It was a good deal of a blow, I believe, to the family and to the entire University. She was very popular and very talented. She wrote charming poetry. I have read some of it. No doubt she would have done great things if she had lived."

"After all," Molly argued with herself, "I went to sleep looking at her photograph. It was the most natural thing in the world to dream about it. But why did she look so sorrowful and then so hopeful? I can't forget her face."

Once again she was on the point of speaking to Professor Green about the mine, and once again she checked her confidence. The cautious Nance had often said to her: "If there's any

doubt about mentioning a thing, I never mention it."

"By the way, Miss Brown, I wonder if there are any vacant rooms here at Queen's?"

"Yes," said Molly, "there happens to be a singleton. It was to have been taken by a junior who broke her arm or something and couldn't come back to college this year. Why? Have you any more little Japs for me to tutor?"

"No, but I was thinking there might have to be some changes a little later, and Miss Blount, my cousin, would perhaps be looking for—er—less commodious quarters. But don't mention it, please. It may not be necessary."

"I may have to make some changes myself for the same reason," thought poor Molly, but she said nothing except a trembly, shaky "good-night," which made the Professor look into her face closely and then stand watching her as she hastened up the steps and was absorbed by the shadowy interior of Queen's still unlighted hallway.

CHAPTER VI.

TWO LONG DISTANCE CALLS.

The President readily granted her gracious permission for the sophomores to use the Wellington alumnae banner. She was pleased at the class spirit which had engendered the request and which had also prompted the sophomores to make a banner of their own.

With reverent hands the young girls hoisted the two splendid pennants on the evening of the reception. And another unusual distinction was granted this extraordinary class of 19—. The President and several of the faculty appeared that evening in the gallery to view the effect. Never before in the memory of students had Prexy attended a sophomore-freshman ball.

"They have certainly made the place attractive," said the President, looking down between the interstices of garlands of Japanese lanterns

on the scene of whirling dancers below. "The banners are really beautiful. I feel quite proud of my sophomores this evening."

The sophomores were proud of themselves and worked hard to make the freshmen have a good time and feel at home. Molly, remembering her own timidity of the year before, took care that there were no wall flowers this gala evening.

She had invited Madeleine Petit, a lonely little Southern girl, who had a room over the post office in the village and was working her way through college somehow. In spite of her own depleted purse, Molly had sent Madeleine a bunch of violets and had hired a carriage for the evening. As for the little freshman, she was ecstatic with pleasure. She never dreamed that her sophomore escort was nearly as poor as she was. People of Molly's type never look poor. The richness of her coloring, her red gold hair and deep blue eyes and a certain graciousness of manner overcame all deficiencies in the style and material of her lavender organdy frock.

But, in spite of her glowing cheeks and out-

ward gaiety, Molly was far from being happy that night. No word had come to her from her family all the week, although they were the most prolific letter writers, all of them. No doubt they hesitated for a while to let her know the truth about the Square Deal Mine. Molly was prepared for anything; prepared to give up college at mid-years and get a position to teach school in the country somewhere; prepared to look the worst in the face bravely. But Wellington was like a second home to her now. She loved its twin gray towers, its classic quadrangle and beautiful cloisters; its spacious campus shaded with elm trees.

How dear these things had grown to her now that the thought of leaving them forced its way into her mind!

She was debating these questions inwardly, as she gallantly led her partner over to the lemonade table, where Mary Stewart, in a beautiful liberty dress of pigeon blue that matched her eyes, was presiding with Judith Blount and two other juniors.

"Why, Molly Brown," exclaimed Mary, "in spite of all your glowingness, you don't seem quite like yourself this evening. Has anything happened to roughen your gentle disposition? No bad news from home, I hope?"

"Oh, no," returned Molly. "No news at all. I haven't heard all week."

Judith, who still had a grudge against Queen's girls, although she was endeavoring to overcome it, here remarked:

"Why, I think you are looking particularly well to-night, Molly. Such a becoming dress!"

Molly flushed as she glanced hastily down at her two-year-old organdy. Mary Stewart put a hand over her cold, slim fingers.

"You always wear becoming dresses, Molly, dear. In fact, they are so becoming that no one ever looks at the dress for looking at you."

Molly smiled and pressed her friend's hand in return. She was wondering if Judith Blount would learn to curb her tongue when she had to curb her expenses.

"I want you to meet Miss Petit," she said, in-

troducing the little freshman to the two older girls.

Mary Stewart shook hands kindly and Judith bowed distantly. Certainly Judith was in a bad humor that night.

"How do you like Wellington?" asked Mary of Miss Petit by way of making conversation.

"I think it's jus' lovely," drawled the little Southerner with her inimitable Louisiana accent. "I never danced on a better flo' befo' in all my life."

Mary Stewart smiled. The soft, melodious voice was music to her ears.

"You live in the Quadrangle, don't you? I think I saw you there the other day," continued Mary.

"Oh, no, I reckon you saw some other girl. I live over the post office in the village."

"She has a charming room," broke in Molly, when she was interrupted by a stifled laugh. Looking up quickly, they were confronted with Judith and one of her boon companions, their faces crimson with suppressed laughter.

Miss Petit regarded the two juniors with a kind of gentle amazement. Then, without the slightest embarrassment, she said to Mary and Molly:

"What lovely manners some of the Wellington girls have!"

At this uncomfortable juncture Edith Williams sailed up.

"This is my dance isn't it, Mademoiselle *Petite*? And while we dance, I want you to talk all the time so that my ears can drink in your liquid tones. Have you heard her speak, Miss Stewart? Isn't it beautiful? It's like the call of the wood-pigeon, so soft and persuasive and delicious."

"Now, you're flattering me," said little Miss Petit, "but I'm glad it doesn't make you laugh, anyhow," and she floated off in the arms of the tall Edith as gracefully as a fluffy little cloud carried along by the breezes.

"Isn't she sweet?" said Molly presently. "And you can't imagine what she is doing to make both ends meet here. She won a scholarship

which pays her tuition, but she has to earn the money for board and clothes and all the rest. She washes dishes at a boarding house for her dinners and cooks her own breakfasts in her room and eats, well, any old thing, for her lunch. On her door is a sign that says, 'Darning, copying, pressing and fine laundry work, shampooing and manicuring.' It makes me feel awfully ashamed of my small efforts."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mary. "How can I help her, Molly, without her knowing it? She seems to be a proud little thing."

"Oh, I don't know. Give her some jabots to do up or have your hair shampooed. She does hand-painting on china, too, but I don't think you could quite go her pink rose designs. She'll outgrow hand-painted china in another year, just as I outgrew framed lithographs and antimacassars in one evening, after seeing your rooms in the Quadrangle."

"By the way, Molly, have you invited anyone for the Glee Club concert yet?"

"No, because I didn't know anyone well enough to ask except Lawrence Upton from Exmoor, and Judith has already asked him."

"Good," said Mary. "Then, will you do me a favor? Brother Willie is coming down to the concert and expects to bring two friends. Will you take one of them under your wing?"

Molly was only too delighted to be of service to the friend who had done so much for her.

"It will be a pleasure and a joy," she said, as she hastened away to find her small partner for the next waltz.

The "Jokes and Croaks" stage of the sophomore-freshman reception had been reached, and Katherine Williams, speaking through the megaphone, was saying:

"An art contribution from the juniors, with accompanying verse:

"'I never saw a purple cow,
And never hope to see one;
But this I know, I vow, I trow:
I'd rather see than be one.'"

While Katherine read the verse, another girl held up a large picture entitled "The Flight of the Royal Family." In the foreground was a little purple cow grazing on purple turf, and in the background, running at full speed, with every indication of extreme terror on their faces, were a dozen queens, wearing gold crowns and lavender and primrose robes.

Hardly a girl at Wellington but had heard of the absurd adventure of the Queen's girls, and a tremendous laugh shook the walls of the gymnasium. In the midst of this uproar, someone touched Molly on the shoulder. It was a junior known to her only by sight, who whispered:

"You're wanted on the telephone."

Now, all telegrams to Wellington College were received at the telegraph office in the village and telephoned over, and when Molly was notified that there was a message for her, she felt instinctively that it was a telegram from home; and they would only telegraph bad news, she was certain.

Her face was pale and her heart thumping as

she hurried out of the gymnasium. Nance and Judy rose and followed her. If anything was the matter with their beloved friend, they were determined to share her trouble.

Molly hastened to the telephone booths in the main corridor.

"Is it a telegram?" she asked the young woman in charge of the switchboard; for, in the last few years telephones had been installed in all the houses of the faculty and their respective offices as well, thereby saving many steps and much time.

"Hello! Long distance?" called the girl, without answering Molly's question. "Here's your party. Booth No. 2," she ordered.

The operator had very little patience with college girls, and this Adamless Eden palled on her city-bred soul.

"Hello!" said Molly.

Then came a small, thin voice, an immense distance away, but strangely familiar.

"Is this Miss Molly Brown of Kentucky?"

"Yes. Who is this?"

"This is Richard Blount. Have you forgotten me?"

"Of course not."

"Is your mother Mrs. Mildred Carmichael Brown, of Carmichael Station, Kentucky?"

"Yes."

"Um! I suppose you think it's very strange, Miss Brown, my asking you this question," called the thin, far-away voice. "I had a very good reason for asking it. Have you heard from home lately?"

"Not for a week. Is anything the matter with my family besides the——"

"No, no, nothing that I know of."

"Is it about the mine?"

"Yes, but you are not to worry. You understand, you are not to worry one instant. Everything will come out all right."

"It was nearly ten thousand dollars," said Molly, almost sobbing; "our house and garden and the rest of the apple orchard that was sending me to college—" Here she broke down com-

pletely. "I may have to give up all this—I may——"

"Now, Miss Molly, you mustn't cry. You make me feel like the very—very unhappy, way off here."

"Five minutes up," called the voice of the exchange.

"Good-by, good-by," called Molly. "I'm sorry I cried, Mr. Blount."

Poor man! It was all terribly hard on him, and it was cruel of her to have given way, but it had come so unawares!

From a corner of her eye, she could see her friends waiting anxiously outside the booth. She pretended to be writing something on the telephone pad with a stubby pencil tied to a string, until she recovered her composure.

"What's the matter?" demanded the two girls as she emerged from the booth.

"It was just a long distance from Richard Blount," said Molly, not knowing what else to say.

"I didn't know you had asked him to go to the Glee Club concert," said Nance.

"He can't go," Molly replied quickly, relieved that they had been willing to accept this explanation.

"I should think he couldn't," put in Judy, in a low voice. "Mamma has just written me such news about the Blounts. The letter came by the late mail and I didn't have a chance to read it until a little while ago. Mr. Blount has failed and gone away, no one knows where. They thought they could pay off his creditors and his family found that he had mortgaged all his property and there wasn't any money left."

In the dimly-lighted corridor the girls had not noticed that Molly had turned perfectly white and was clasping and unclasping her hands convulsively in an effort to retain her self-control.

"No money left?" she repeated in a low voice.

"Not a cent," said Judy. "Papa knows because he had some friends who lost money in a mine or something Mr. Blount owned."

"Poor Judith," observed Nance. "Do you suppose she hasn't been told?"

"Of course not. She wouldn't be flaunting around here to-night if she knew her family were in trouble."

"How strange for us to know and for her not to!" pursued Nance.

"It isn't generally known. Mamma says the papers haven't got hold of it yet, and I'm not to tell. You see mamma and I met Judith Blount one afternoon at a matinee just before college opened. That's why she was interested, because she remembered that Judith was Mr. Blount's daughter."

All this time Molly's mind was busy working out the problem of how to remain at college without any money. Of course, the Blounts couldn't pay their father's debts on nothing, although Richard Blount had told her not to worry. The family would have to move out of their old home, she supposed, and take a small house in town, and everybody would have to just turn in and go to work. Oh, why had her mother heeded the

advice of old Colonel Gray? He had assured her that she would make at least fifteen thousand from the money invested, while he, poor man, had squandered his entire inheritance in the enterprise, just because an old and intimate friend was backing it. That old and intimate friend was Mr. Blount, and Molly had never guessed it.

Pretty soon it was time to go home. Molly found herself in the carriage, trying to listen politely to the ceaseless flow of Miss Petit's conversation, while she wrapped her old, gray eiderdown cape about her and thought and thought. Suddenly the words of Madeleine Petit pierced her troubled mind.

"Do you write, Miss Brown? I wish I could. I'd like to try for some of the prizes for short stories. Think of winning a thousand dollars for one story! Wouldn't it be glorious? Then, there are some advertisement prizes, too. One for five hundred dollars; think of that! I always cut out every one I see, meaning to compete, but

I never do. It isn't in my line, you see. I'm going to major in mathematics."

Molly smiled that the dainty little creature should have chosen that hated subject for her life's work.

"You say you saved the clippings about prizes?" she asked when they had reached Madeleine's lodging.

"Oh, yes; I have them all in my room. Would you like to see some of them? Tell the man to wait, and I'll bring them down."

Molly reached Queen's that night before the other girls, and hastening to the student's lamp, she proceeded to look over the clippings.

One was from a leading woman's magazine; one from a magazine of short stories; several from advertising firms—the best jingle about a stove polish; the best catchy phrase about a laundry soap; the best advertisement in verse or prose for a real estate company which had purchased an entire mountain and was engaged in erecting numbers of Swiss chalets for summer residents. The pictures of these pretty little houses were

very attractive. Many of them had poetical names. One of them, called "The Chalet of the West Wind," occupied the centre of the page. From its broad gallery could be seen a long vista of valley, flanked by mountain ranges.

"What a charming place!" thought Molly, and that night she went to bed with the "Chalet of the West Wind" so deeply photographed in her mind that she almost felt as if she had been there herself. She could see it perched on the side of the mountain, looking across the valley. It was at the very edge of the forest. The picture showed that, and in her imagination she scented the wild flowers that must grow at its feet in the springtime. No doubt the west wind, which symbolized health and happiness, fair weather and sunshine, blew softly through its open casements and across its spacious galleries.

She went to sleep dreaming of the "Chalet of the West Wind," and in the morning something throbbed in her pulses. It was a kind of muffled pounding at first, like the beginning of a long distance call, "lumpty-tum-tum; lumpty-tum-

tum." But gradually a poem took shape in her mind, and as the fragments came to her she wrote them down on scraps of paper and hid them carefully in her desk.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GLEE CLUB CONCERT.

"If a cross-section could be made of this house, it would be rather amusing," exclaimed Judy Kean. "In every room there would be one girl buttoning up another girl."

It was the evening of the Glee Club concert, and nearly everybody not a freshman was going to dine somewhere before the concert. Judy and Nance were invited to the McLeans', and Molly was to have dinner with Mary Stewart and her guests in the Quadrangle apartment. During the process of dressing there was a great deal of "cross-talk" going on at Queen's that night. Through the open doors along the corridors voices could be heard calling:

"Has anyone a piece of narrow black velvet?"

"Margaret, don't you dare go without hooking me up!"

"Who thinks white shoes and stockings are too dressy?"

"Oh my, but you look scrumptious!"

Molly had saved her most prized dress for this occasion. It was the one she had purchased the Christmas before in New York and was made of old blue chiffon cloth over a "slimsy" satin lining, with two big old rose velvet poppies at the belt. It was cut out in the neck and the sleeves were short. Just before coming back to college, she had indulged in long ecru suède gloves, which she now drew on silently. She had received a letter from her mother that morning and her heart was heavy within her. The letter said:

"The investment I made last summer has not turned out well. The young son has assured me that the family intends to pay back all the creditors, and I am trying not to worry. In the meantime, my precious daughter, you must not think of giving up college, as you offered in your last letter; that is, until this term is over. Then we will see what can be done, although I am obliged to tell you that things do not look very hopeful

about any present funds. Jane is to take a position in town as librarian and Minnie intends to start a dancing class. Your brothers and sisters and I will get on, but oh, I did so want you to have the advantages of a good education."

"But so much else goes with the education," Molly protested to herself. "So many pleasures and enjoyments. Somehow, it doesn't seem fair for me to be going to glee club concerts when all my family are working so hard."

"Have you any stamps, Judy?" she asked suddenly, as she hooked that young woman into her dress.

"As many as you want up to a dozen," answered Judy. "They are in the pill box on my desk."

Molly made her way through Judy's tumbled apartment and helped herself to the stamps.

"I'll return them to-morrow," she said absently, drawing a letter from her portfolio, slipping one stamp into the envelope, and sticking the other on the back.

"What in the world are you writing to a real

estate firm for, Molly?" demanded Judy, looking over Molly's shoulder.

"Oh, just answering an ad."

"Are you so rich that you are going to buy a farm?"

"I wish I were."

Judy's curiosity never gave her any peace, and she now desired earnestly to know why Molly was corresponding with this strange firm.

"If it turns out well, I'll tell you," said Molly; "but if it doesn't, you'll never, never know."

"You mean thing, and I thought you loved me," ejaculated Judy.

"I do. That's why I won't tell you. If I did, I would have to inflict something worse on you, and you wouldn't be so thankful for that part."

"I shall burst if I don't know," cried Judy in despair.

"Burst into a million little pieces then, like the Snow Queen's looking glass and get into people's eyes and make them see queer Judy pictures and think queerer Judy thoughts."

"Meany, meany," called Judy after her friend,

who had seized her gray eider-down cape and was fleeing down the hall.

"I love all this," thought Molly, as she hastened up the campus to the Quadrangle. "I adore the gay talk and the jokes—oh, heavens, but it will be hard to leave it! I understand now how Mary Stewart felt when she almost decided not to come back this year and then gave up and came after all."

Molly felt she would enjoy the sensation of being waited on at table that night instead of waiting herself, as she had done about this time last year at Judith Blount's dinner. She wondered if there would be a poor little trembly freshman to pass the food. But Mary was too kind-hearted for such things and had engaged two women in the village to cook and serve her dinner.

The other guests had not arrived when Molly let herself into the beautiful living room of the apartment, which was now turned into a dining room. The drop-leaf mahogany table had been drawn into the middle of the floor and was set

with dazzling linen and silver for eight persons.

"I wonder who the other two are," thought Molly.

"Is that you, Molly, dear?" called Mary from the bedroom. "Well, come and hook my dress—" how many yards of hooks and eyes had Molly joined together that evening! "And here's something for you. Willie, when he found out you were taking him, sent you some violets."

"Heavens!" cried the young girl, after she had finished Mary and opened the large purple box. "Oh, Mary, this bunch is big enough for three people."

"It's only intended for one, and that's you," laughed the other.

The bouquet was indeed as large as a soup plate.

"I don't think I'd better wear them to dinner. I couldn't see over them. I should feel as if I were carrying a violet bed on my chest."

"And so you are. No doubt it took all the violets from one large double bed for that bunch. But you had better wear them at first, and take

them off at the table. Brother Willie is one of the touchiest young persons imaginable. Father and I have always called him 'the sensitive plant.' "

Hastily Molly pinned on the enormous bunch, which covered the entire front of her dress.

"They are coming now," she said, hearing steps in the next room; and, peeping through the door, she beheld "Brother Willie" himself, resplendent in his evening clothes, in company with two other equally resplendent beings, all wearing white gardenias in their buttonholes.

"My goodness, they look like a wedding!" Molly whispered to her friend.

"Aren't they grand?" laughed Mary. "And here I am as plain as an old shoe, and never will be anything else."

"You are the finest thing I know," exclaimed Molly, tucking her arm through her friend's and allowing herself to be led rather timidly into the living room.

The third girl at this fine affair was another post-grad., and presently Molly rejoiced to see

Miss Grace Green enter with her brother, Edwin. Miss Green looked very pretty and young. She kissed Molly and told her she was a dear, and smelt the violets and pinched her cheek, glancing slyly at the three young men, any one of whom might have burdened her with that huge bouquet. And did not such bouquets argue something more than ordinary friendship?

As for the Professor, he glanced at the bouquet almost before he looked at Molly. Then he shook her stiffly by the hand and, turning away, devoted himself to the post-grad.

"Do they know that my mother has lost all her money in their cousin's mine?" Molly thought. "Perhaps that's the reason why Professor Green is so cold tonight. He's embarrassed."

At dinner Molly sat between Will Stewart and an elegant, rich young man named Raymond Bellaire, who talked in rather a drawling voice about yachting parties and cross-country riding and motoring. "At college, you know, the fellahs are awfully set on those little two-seated electric affairs." What car did Molly prefer?

Molly was obliged to admit that she preferred the Stewart car in New York, whatever that was, it being the only one she had ever ridden in.

The young man screwed a monocle into one eye and looked at her. He was half English and had half a right to a monocle, but Molly wished he wouldn't screw up his eye like that. It made her want to laugh. However, he didn't appear to notice at all that she was endeavoring to keep the irresistible laugh-curve from her lips. He only looked at her harder, and then remarked:

"I say, by Jove, you'd make a jolly fine Portia. Did you ever think of going on the stage?"

"Oh, no; I'm going to be a school teacher," answered Molly.

"School teacher?" he repeated aghast. "You? With that hair and—by Jove—those violets!" His eyes had lighted on the mammoth bunch. "Tell that to the marines."

Molly flushed.

"The violets haven't anything to do with my teaching school," she said a little indignantly.

"And neither has my hair. Didn't you ever see a red-headed school teacher?"

"Not when her hair curled like that and had glints of gold in it."

"You're teasing me because I'm only a sophomore," she said, and turned her head away.

"No, by Jove, I'm not though," protested Raymond Bellaire, looking much pained. But Molly was talking to Willie Stewart at her right.

That young man was the most correct individual in the matter of clothes, deportment and small talk she had ever seen. She thought of his splendid father, who had started life as a bootblack.

"I wonder if he's pleased with his fashion-plate son?" she pondered.

She didn't care for him or his friends. They were not like the jolly boys over at Exmoor, who talked about basket-ball and football, and swopped confidences regarding Latin and Greek and that *awful* French Literature examination, and what this professor was like, and what the Prexy said or was supposed to have said, and so

on. It was all college gossip, but Molly enjoyed it and contributed her share eagerly. She tried a little of it on Brother Willie.

"Are you taking up Higher Math. this year, Mr. Stewart?" she asked.

"Oh, after a fashion," he answered. "I don't expect to stay at college after this year. I'm going to Paris to finish off."

Molly wondered what "Higher Math. after a fashion" really meant.

At the concert later it was a relief to find herself next to Professor Green, who had scarcely looked in her direction all through dinner. At first she felt a little embarrassed, sitting next to the Professor, who was a great man at Wellington. She began silently to admire the packed audience of young girls in light dresses with a generous sprinkling of young men in evening clothes.

"You'll probably be a member of the club next year, Miss Brown," the Professor was saying. "I'm sure you must sing. I am surprised they

have not found it out by this time. Next winter you must——"

"I doubt if I am here next winter," interrupted Molly, and then blushed furiously and bit her lip. She wished she had not made that speech.

"Is anything going to happen that will keep you from coming to college next winter?" he asked, glancing at the violets.

"How can I tell what will happen?" she answered childishly.

"Then, why not come back next year?"

"Because—because——" she began. "Oh, here they come!" she interrupted herself to say, as the members of the Glee Club filed slowly out and took their seats. "Aren't they sweet in their white dresses?"

"Very!" answered the Professor, "but what's this about next year? It was just idle talk, wasn't it?"

"No, no," whispered Molly, for the first number was about to begin; "hasn't Mr. Blount told you anything?"

"Why, no. That is, nothing about you. What on earth?"

"Didn't you have a list of the stockholders?"

"You mean of the Square Deal Mine?" he asked in entire amazement.

"Yes."

"I have a list, but what of it?"

"My mother's name is there—Mrs. Mildred Carmichael Brown."

"Great heavens!" groaned the Professor. Then he sunk far down in his seat and buried his face in his program.

Jenny Wren opened the concert with this song, which suited her high, bird-like voice to perfection:

" 'Oh, I wish I were a tiny,
Browny bird from out the South,
Settled among the alderholts
And twittering by the stream;
I would put my tiny tail down
And put up my little mouth,
And sing my tiny life away
In one melodious dream.

" 'I would sing about the blossoms,
And the sunshine and the sky,
And the tiny wife I mean to have,
In such a cosy nest;
And if someone came and shot me dead,
Why, then, I could but die,
With my tiny life and tiny song
Just ended at their best.' "

There was something so moving about the little song that Molly felt she could have melted into a fountain of tears like Undine; and she was obliged to smile and smile and pretend that her heart wasn't breaking because her tiny life and tiny song at Wellington—her beloved Wellington—were soon to come to an end. The Professor, too, was stirred. He glanced once at Molly's smiling lips and tearful eyes and blew his nose violently. Then again he contemplated the program with great interest.

During the intermission, Molly and Will Stewart went visiting down the aisle. Half the audience was moving about, talking to the other half,

and the hall was filled with the buzz of laughter and conversation.

"I love it! I love it!" Molly kept repeating to herself. "There couldn't be anything more perfect than college. Oh, do I have to give it up?"

"Hey, Miss Molly!" called Andy McLean in a nearby seat, while Judy and Nance and George Theodore Green were waving violently to her, and Lawrence Upton was shaking hands with her and assuring her that the dinner had been a failure because she hadn't been there. Fortunately, Judith was well out of ear-shot behind the scenes. The Williams sisters, from across the aisle, were calling in one voice:

"Molly, come and meet our brother John."

Margaret Wakefield, causing a sensation with her distinguished father, and enduring the gaze of the entire audience with the calmness of one reared in the public eye, detained her for a moment to introduce her to the famous politician.

"A real belle," said Miss Grace Green to her brother, leaning across two seats to speak to him, "is one who is just as popular with women as

with men, and Miss Molly Brown of Kentucky appears to be a general favorite."

The Professor looked at his sister absently. Apparently, he hadn't heard a word she said.

He was saying to himself:

"I think I'll let the tenor sing that little lyric that begins: 'Eyes like the skies in summer.'"

After a while the delightful affair was over, and Molly, feeling immensely happy in spite of her anxious heart, had been escorted to Queen's. Professor Edwin Green, hastening into his room, flung his hat in one direction and his coat in another, and sat down at his desk. Without an instant's hesitation, he seized a pencil and the first scrap of paper he found and began to write:

"Dear Richard:

"I know that your cares are many, but get to work on the score of the opera. I find that by working at night for a week I shall be able to finish the last act and make all the changes you suggested. We must launch the thing now. I have overcome all scruples, as you called them, and I want nothing more than to get the opera into some manager's hands. If you think that Blum & Starks will take it up, you had better see them at once. My name may be used and every-

thing that goes with it in the way of previous unimportant literary efforts. It's unusual, of course, for a Professor of English Literature to write a comic opera, but the very unusualness may give it some publicity and help the thing along. I have made one change without conferring; given the tenor-lover the baritone-villain's song: 'Eyes like the skies in summer.' Write something very pretty for that, will you, old man? The money we may make on this will help some in the present critical family situation. I understand that there have been a good many failures in light opera this winter, and the managers are looking for good things. It may be that we shall strike at the psychological moment.

"Yours, E. G."

The august Professor then wrote two other letters; one to a firm of bankers and one to his publishers. At last, getting into an old dressing gown and some very rusty slippers, lighting a long, black cigar and drawing his student's lamp nearer, he took an immense roll of manuscript from a drawer and fell to work. It was three o'clock before he turned in for three hours of troubled sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

A JAPANESE SPREAD.

One morning every girl at Queen's discovered by her plate at the breakfast table a strange rice paper document some twelve inches in length and very narrow as to width, rolled compactly on a small stick.

"What's this?" demanded Margaret Wakefield, unrolling her scroll and regarding it with the legal eye of an attorney perusing documentary evidence.

Across the top of the scroll swung a gay little row of Japanese lanterns done in delicate water colors, and in characters strangely Japanese was inscribed the following invitation:

"Greetings from
Otoyo Sen:
Your honorable

presence is
requested on
Saturday evening
at the insignificant fête
in the unworthily
apartment of
Otoyo Sen.
Otoyo muchly
flattered by
joyful acceptance."

Fortunately, the little Japanese girl, overcome by shyness after this rash venture, had not appeared at breakfast and was spared the mirthful expressions on the faces of the girls around the table.

"Well, of all the funny children," laughed Molly. "Nance, let's offer her our room. She can't get the crowd into her little place."

"Of course," said Nance, agreeable to anything her roommate might suggest.

Not a single girl declined the quaint invitation and formal acceptances were sent that very day.

Otoyo was so excited and happy over these missives that she seemed to be in a state of semi-exaltation for the better part of a week. She rushed to the village and sent off a telegram and before Saturday morning received at least a dozen mysterious boxes by express. They were piled one on top of the other in her room like an Oriental pyramid and no one was permitted to see their contents.

All offers of assistance were refused the day of the party. Otoyo wished to carry out her ideas in her own peculiar way and needed only a step-ladder. If it was not asking too much, would the beautiful and kind friends not enter their room until that evening? Removing all things needful in the way of books and clothes to Judy's room, the beautiful and kind friends good-naturedly absented themselves from their apartment from ten in the morning to seven-thirty that evening. Molly spent the afternoon in the library studying, and Nance called on Mrs. McLean and drank a cup of tea and ate a buttered scone, while she cast an occasional covert

glance in the direction of Andy junior's photograph on the mantel.

It was well before eight o'clock when the inquisitive guests assembled, and there were at least twenty of them; for Otoyo's acquaintance was large and numbered girls from all four classes. They met downstairs in a body and then marched up to the third story together.

"Let's give her a serenade before we knock," suggested Judy, and they sang: "The sweetest girl in Wellington is O-to-yo." Any name could be fitted into this convenient and ingenious song.

Otoyo flung open the door and stood smiling before them. Her manner was the very quintessence of hospitality. She wore a beautiful embroidered kimono and her hair was fixed Japanese fashion. Even her shoes were Japanese, and she carried a little fan which she agitated charmingly to express her excited emotions.

All her English forsook her in the excitement of greeting her guests and she could only repeat over and over again:

"Otoyo delightly—Otoyo delightly."

"Well, I never," ejaculated Nance, entering her old familiar room, now transformed into a gay Japanese bazaar.

"Is this the parent of all the umbrella family?" demanded Judy, pointing to an enormous parasol swung in some mysterious manner from the centre of the ceiling and resembling a large fish swimming among a numerous small-fry of lanterns. The divans were spread with Japanese covers, and over the white dimity curtains were hung cotton crepe ones of pale blue with a pink cherry-blossom design. In one corner stood a vase, from which poured the incense of smoking joss-sticks. Funny little handleless cups were ranged on the table and lacquered trays of candied fruits, rice cakes and other indescribable Japanese "meat-sweets," as Otoyo had called them. The little hostess flew about the room exactly as the *Three Little Maids* did in "The Mikado," waving her fan and bowing profoundly to her guests. Presently, sitting cross-legged on the floor, she sang a song in her own language, accompanying herself on a curious stringed instru-

ment, a kind of Japanese banjo. She was, in fact, the funniest, queerest, most captivating little creature ever seen. She loaded her guests with souvenirs, little lacquered boxes, fans and diminutive toys.

"I feel as if I were a belle at a grand cotillion with all these lovely favors," exclaimed Jessie Lynch.

"Of course, you would always be laden with favors," said Judy; "that is, if you could get all your beaux to come to the same cotillion. You are like the sailor who had a lass in every port. I strongly suspect you of having an admirer in every prominent city in the country."

Jessie laughed and dimpled.

"No," she said; "I stopped at the Rocky Mountains."

Otoyo, who had been listening closely to this dialogue, suddenly bethought herself of a new sensation she had provided for her friends, which she was about to forget.

"Oh," she cried, "I nearlee forgetting. American girl love fortune telling? So do Japanese.

OTOYO TOOK THE SLIP AND, ... TRANSLATED IN A HIGH FUNNY VOICE.—*Page* 117.

You like to have your fortune told?" she asked, cocking her head on one side like a little bird and blinking at Jessie.

"Would she?" cried a dozen ironical voices.

"I hope it's nothing disagreeable and there's no bad luck in it," said Jessie, drawing a slip of paper from a flat, shiny box. "But it's all in Japanese," she added, with much disappointment.

"Otoyo will translate it. Won't you, you cunning little sugar-lump?" asked Molly.

"Everybodee choose and then I will make into English," said the small, busy hostess, flying from one to another on her marshmallow soles.

"Me first of all," cried the eager Jessie. "I had first draw."

Otoyo took the slip and, holding it under a lantern, translated in a high, funny voice:

"He happy who feesh for one and catch heem, than feesh for many and catch none."

The wild whoop of joy that went up at this unexpectedly appropriate statement made the lanterns quiver and the teacups rattle.

Some of the others were not so appropriate,

but they were all very amusing. Mabel Hinton, who had been nicknamed "old maid" the year before, drew one which announced:

"Your daughters will make good matches."

The girls laughed till the tears ran down their cheeks at this prediction, and Mabel was quite teased.

"I'd like to know why I shouldn't have a family of marriageable daughters some day," she exclaimed, blinking at them with near-sighted eyes while she wiped the moisture from her large round glasses.

Nance's fortune was a very sentimental one and caused her to blush as red as a rose.

"Love will not change, neither in the cold weenter time nor in the warm spreengtime under the cherry-blossoms when the moon ees bright."

"Oh, thou blushing maiden," cried Judy, "canst look us in the eye after this?"

Molly's was rather comforting to her troubled and unquiet heart.

"Look for cleer weather when the sky ees blackest."

Of all the mottoes, Judy's was the funniest.

"Eef thy hus-band beat thee, geeve heem a smile."

"Smile indeed," exclaimed that young woman when the laughter had died down; "I'll just turn the tables on him and beat him back, Otoyo. American young lady quite capable of giving honorable husband a good trouncing with a black-snake whip."

Otoyo opened her eyes at this. It was doubtful whether she could appreciate the humor of her mottoes, but she enjoyed hearing the girls laugh; she realized they must be having a good time if they laughed like that—really genuine, side-shaking laughter and no lip-smiles for politeness' sake.

"Who's heard the news about Judith Blount?" asked one of the Williamses, after the party had broken up and only the Queen's girls remained.

Molly and Judy and Nance exchanged telegraphic glances. They had been careful to keep secret what Mrs. Kean had written her daughter, and they were curious to know just how

much the others knew on the subject, which was now always uppermost, at least in Molly's mind.

"She's sub-let her apartment, furnished, to that rich freshman from New York, whose father's worth a fortune a minute from gold mines and oil wells, and she, I mean Judith, is taking the empty singleton here."

"You don't mean it!" cried a chorus of voices.

"It seems to me I heard that a Mr. Blount lost a lot of money," observed Margaret. "It must have been her father."

"How are the mighty fallen!" exclaimed Edith Williams. "I should think she'd have gone anywhere rather than here."

"She couldn't get in any of the less expensive places unless she had taken a room over the post office in the village."

"Poor Judith!" ejaculated Jessie. "I've known it for a week."

To save her life Molly could not keep a tiny little barbed thought from piercing her mind: "Is it fair for Judith to stay at college when I

have to leave? Has she any right to the money that's paying her tuition?"

Molly turned quickly and began gathering up the débris from the tea-tables. Anything to get that bitter notion out of her head.

"Let's be awfully nice to her, girls," she said presently. "I'm sure she's terribly unhappy. Remember what success we had with Frances Andrews last year just through a little kind treatment."

"Judith is a different subject altogether," said Margaret, argumentatively. "She has such a dreadful temper. You never can tell when it's going to break loose."

With the Goddess of War sitting among them at this moment, nobody dared betray by the flick of an eyelash that there were others whose tempers were rather uncertain. Only Jessie observed:

"Well, Margaret, dear, you got the better of her that time at the Ledges, temper or no temper."

"I doubt if she takes to poverty as a duck to

water," here put in Judy. "She'll make a very impatient tutor, and I'd hate to have her black my boots. She might throw them at my head."

"She is certainly not subdued by her reverses," remarked Jessie. "She's just like a caged animal. I never saw anything to equal her. I went over there this afternoon and she was packing. She almost pitched me out of the room. Of course, it's very luxurious at Beta Phi House, but her little room here isn't to be scorned. It's really quite pretty, with lovely paper and matting and chintz curtains and wicker chairs."

Suddenly a wave of indignation swept over Molly. Nobody had ever seen her look as she looked now, burning spots of color on her cheeks and her eyes black.

"What right has she—how dare she—she should be thankful—" she burst out incoherently. Then she stamped both feet up and down like an angry child and flung herself face down on the couch in an agony of tears. It was a kind of mental tempest, resembling one of those sudden storms which come with a flash of lightning, a

roaring crash of thunder and then a downpour of rain.

"Why, Mary Carmichael Washington Brown," exclaimed Judy, kneeling beside poor Molly, "whatever has come over you?"

Little Otoyo was so frightened that she hid behind a Japanese screen, while the other girls sat dumb with amazement.

The Williams girls were intensely interested, and Margaret, always consistent and logical in her decisions, knew very well that there was something serious back of it.

"Please forgive me," said Molly presently, wiping her eyes and sitting up as limp as a rag. "I'm awfully sorry to have spoiled the evening like this. I didn't mean it. It just slipped out of me before I knew it was coming."

"Why, you old sweetness," exclaimed the affectionate Judy, "of course, you are forgiven. I guess you ought to be allowed a few outbursts. But what caused it?"

"I think it was nervousness," answered Molly evasively.

But the girls began to realize that it was not entirely nervousness. It occurred to them now that Molly had been preoccupied and strangely silent for some time. Occasionally she gave way to forced gaiety. Twice she had started on walks, changed her mind and come back, without giving any excuse except that she was a little tired. It was, in fact, a condition that had come about so gradually that they were hardly aware they had noticed it until this sudden breakdown.

"She's dead tired and ought to get to bed this minute," remarked Nance, caressing her friend's hand.

"Dearest Molly," said Jessie, who was moved by a gentle sympathy always for those in trouble, "go to bed and get a good rest. It was just nice and human of you to get mad once in a thousand years and we love you all the better for it."

They were good friends, all of them, Molly felt, as they kissed her or pressed her hand good-night, while Nance and Judy hastened to clear off the divan and put up the windows to blow out the heavy, incense-scented air.

It was Otoyo, however, who brought the tears back to poor Molly's eyes.

"Dear, beautiful Mees Brown," she said. "You must not think it will come wrong. It will come right, I feel, surelee."

"What is it, Nance?" whispered Judy, after they had got their friend to bed.

Nance shook her head.

"Heaven knows," she answered. "But it's something, and it must be serious, Judy, or she never would have let go like that."

CHAPTER IX.

VESPERS.

There was a pretty little Episcopal chapel in the village of Wellington, where at Vespers on Sunday afternoons the students were wont to congregate. Six Wellington girls always served as ushers and the college Glee Club formed the Chapel choir.

"It's a good thing to go to Vespers," remarked Judy one Sabbath afternoon, pinning on her large velvet hat before the mirror over the mantel, notably the most becoming mirror in the house, "not only for the welfare of our souls, but also to attire ourselves in decent clothes."

"I suspect you of thinking it's good for your soul to wear good clothes, Judy," observed Nance.

"You suspect rightly, then," answered Judy. "If I had to dress in rags, I'm afraid my soul

would become a thing of shreds and patches, too, all shiny at the seams and down at the heels."

Nance laughed.

"That's a funny way to talk, considering you are about to attend Vespers at the Chapel of the good St. Francis, who took the vows of poverty and lived a roving life on the hills around Assisi."

"That's all very true," said Judy, "and I've seen the picture of him being married to Lady Poverty, but our dispositions are different, St. Francis's and mine. I like the roving over the hills part, because I'm a wanderer by nature, but I like to wander in nice clothes. My manners are getting to be regular old gray sweater manners, and if I didn't put on my velvet suit and best hat once a week there's no telling what kind of a rude creature I would become."

"Why, Julia Kean, I'm ashamed of you," cried Nance, "you've as good as confessed that you go to Vespers to show your fine clothes."

"I don't go to show 'em, goosie; I go to wear 'em. But you have no sense of humor. What's

the good of telling you anything? Molly, there, understands my feelings, I am sure."

Molly was not listening. She was making calculations at her desk with a blunt pencil on a scrap of paper.

"I've got as good a sense as you have," cried Nance hotly, "only I don't approve of being humorous about sacred things."

"Nonsense," broke in Judy, "don't you know, child, that you can't limit humor? It spreads over every subject and it's not necessarily profane because it touches on clothes at church. I suppose you think there is nothing funny about the Reverend Gustavus Adolphus Larsen, and you have forgotten how you giggled that Sunday when he announced from the pulpit that his text was taken from St. Paul's 'Efistle to the Epeesians.'"

"He's always getting mixed," here put in Molly, who at certain stages in the warm discussions between Nance and Judy always sounded a pacifying note. "They do say that he was talk-

ing to Miss Walker about one of the faculty pews, and he said: 'Do you occupew this pi?' "

This was too much for Nance's severity, and she broke down and laughed gaily with the others.

"He's a funny little man," she admitted, "but he's well meaning."

"Hurry up," admonished Judy; "it's twenty minutes of four and I want to get a good seat this afternoon."

"You want to show off your new fashionable headgear, you mean, Miss Vanity," said Nance, pinning on her neat brown velvet toque and squinting at herself in the mirror.

"Oh, me," thought Molly, "I wish I had a decent garment to show off."

She had intended to buy some clothes that autumn from a purchasing agent who came several times a year to Wellington with catalogues and samples, but she had been afraid to spend any of the money she had earned because of the precarious state of the family finances.

She ran her hatpin through her old soft gray

felt, which had a bright blue wing at one side, and slipped on the coat of her last winter's gray suit. Then she drew white yarn gloves over her kid ones, because she had no muff and her hands were always frozen, and stoically marched across the campus with her friends.

The Chapel was already crowded when the girls arrived. They had not heard that the Rev. Gustavus's pulpit was to be filled that afternoon by a preacher from New York. At any rate, they had to sit in the little balcony, which commanded a better view of the minister than it did of the congregation. He was a nice-looking young man, with an unaffected manner, and he preached to the packed congregation as if he were talking quietly and simply to one person; at least, it seemed so to Molly. The sermon was a short address on "Faith." It contained no impassioned eloquence nor fiery exhortations, but it impressed the students profoundly.

"Don't try to instruct God about the management of your lives," he said, "any more than you would direct a wise and kind master who em-

ployed you to work on his estate. All the Great Master asks of you is to work well and honestly. The reward is sure to come. You cannot hurry it and you cannot make it greater than you deserve. It is useless to struggle and rage inwardly. Is not that being rather like a spoiled child, who lies on the floor and kicks and screams because his mother won't give him any more cake? Just put your affairs in the hands of God and go quietly along, doing the best you can. All of a sudden the conditions you once struggled against will cease to exist, and before you have realized it, the thing you asked for is yours."

Lots of people, the minister said, prayed a great deal without believing that their prayers would be heard. It reminded him of a little anecdote.

"One Sunday morning during a terrible drought a country preacher knelt in the midst of his family at home and prayed earnestly for rain. When it was time to start for church, the minister noticed that his little daughter was carrying an umbrella.

" 'Why do you take an umbrella, my child?' he asked, glancing at the cloudless sky.

" 'Didn't you just pray for rain, father?' she answered.

"All the learning of the ages is not greater than the simple faith of a little child," finished the young preacher.

And now the sermon was over and the girls were chatting in groups outside the Chapel, or strolling along the sidewalk arm in arm. Molly had withdrawn from her companions for a moment and was standing alone in a corner of the vestibule.

"I'm afraid I've been acting just like the little child who threw himself on the floor and kicked and screamed for more cake," she was thinking. "I suppose another year at college is just like a nice big hunk of chocolate cake and it wouldn't be good for mental digestion. I might as well stop struggling and begin to cram mathematics. That's the hardest thing I have, and I ought to get in as much of it as I can before I go."

"Perhaps you won't have to go at all," spoke another voice in her mind.

But Molly couldn't see it that way. Other letters from her mother had made it clear to her that no more money could be raised. There was a good place waiting for her to step into, however, in a small private school made up of children who lived in the neighborhood. She could come home after the mid-year examinations when the present teacher in the school was planning to be married.

"Oh, Miss Brown," someone said. Molly looked up quickly. It was President Walker. "Will you walk along with me? I had a letter from your mother last night and I want to speak to you about it."

The President was a very democratic and motherly woman who not only guided the affairs of the college with a wise hand, but kept in personal touch with her girls, and it was not unusual to see her walking home from Vespers with several students. This time, however, she took Molly's arm and led her down the village

street without asking any of the others to join her.

The young girl was very sensible of the honor paid her, thus singled out by the President to walk back to college. She felt a shy pleasure in the sensation they created as the crowd of students parted to let them pass.

"I am very, very sorry to receive this news from your mother, Miss Brown," began the President. "I suppose you know what it is?"

"You mean about leaving college, Miss Walker?"

"Yes. It's really a great distress to me to think that one of my Queen's girls especially must give up in the middle of her course. Instead of listening to that young man at Vespers, I was thinking and thinking about this unwelcome news."

Molly smiled. She had managed to listen to the preaching and to think about her affairs at the same time, because they somehow seemed to fit together. Once she almost felt that perhaps he knew all about her case and was preaching

to her. But, of course, everybody had problems and lots of the girls thought the same thing, no doubt,—Madeleine Petit, for instance.

"Is there no possible way it could be arranged?" went on the President. "Is this decision of your mother's final?"

Evidently Mrs. Brown had not explained why Molly was obliged to come home.

"Oh, she didn't decide it," answered the young girl, quickly. "It's because—because the money's gone—lost."

"I suspected it was something of that sort," went on the President. "Now, there is a way, Miss Brown, by which you could remain if you would be willing to leave Queen's Cottage. I am in charge of a Student Fund for just such cases as yours. This provides for tuition and board,—not on the campus, but in the village. You're making something now tutoring the little Japanese girl, I understand. That's good. That will help along. You will have to manufacture some excuse to your friends about leaving Queen's.

Otherwise, the fund arrangement may remain a secret between you and me."

Miss Walker pressed the girl's hand and smiled kindly as she searched her face for some sign of gladness and relief at this offer.

Molly tried to smile back.

"We'll leave everything as it is until the end of this semester," continued the President.

"Thank you very, very much," Molly said, making a great effort to keep her voice from sounding shaky.

Leave Queen's! Was it possible the President didn't know that life at Queen's was the best part of college to her? Would there be any pleasure left if she had to tear herself away from her beloved chums and take up quarters in the village, living on a charity fund?

When she separated from Miss Walker at the McLeans' front door, she was so filled with inward lamentations and weeping that she could scarcely say good-night to the President, who looked somewhat puzzled at the girl's still pale face.

Rushing back to Queen's, Molly flung herself through the front door and tore upstairs. On the landing she bumped into Judith Blount, who gave her a sullen, angry look.

"Please be careful next time and don't take up the whole stairs," exclaimed that young woman rudely.

Molly glanced at her wildly. What right had she to talk, this wretch of a girl who could remain at Queen's and live on other people's money? Oh, oh, oh! Misery of miseries! She rushed up the second flight. She was having what Judy called "the dry weeps." At the door of Otoyo's room she paused. It was half open and the little Japanese was sitting cross-legged on the floor with a lamp beside her, studying.

"May I come in?"

"With much gladness," answered Otoyo, rising and bowing ceremoniously.

"I want to stay in here a little while, Otoyo, away from other people. May I sit here by the window in this big chair? Go on with your lessons. I don't want to talk. I wanted to be with

someone who was quite quiet. I should have been obliged to hide in a closet if you hadn't let me in."

"I am very happily glad you came to me," said Otoyo.

She helped Molly off with her coat and hat, pulled out the Morris chair so that it faced the window and sat down again quietly with her book.

At the end of three-quarters of an hour, Otoyo began to move noiselessly about the room. Molly was still sitting in the big arm-chair, her hands clasped in her lap. Presently she became aware that Otoyo was standing silently before her bearing a lacquer tray on which was a cup of tea and a rice cake.

"Otoyo, you sweet, little dear," she said, placing the tray on the arm of the chair. She gulped down the tea and ate the cake, and while the small hostess made another cupful, Molly continued: "Otoyo, I'm going to let God manage my affairs hereafter. I'm not going to lie on the floor any more and kick and scream like a spoiled child for another piece of chocolate cake.

I shall always carry an umbrella now when I pray for rain, and I mean to begin to-night to polish up in math."

"I am happily glad," said Otoyo, giving her a gentle, sympathetic smile.

CHAPTER X.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

There was no happier girl in Wellington one morning than Nance Oldham, and all because she had been invited to the Thanksgiving dance at Exmoor College. Nance had never been to a real dance in her life, except a "shirtwaist" party at the seashore, where she had been a hopeless wallflower because she had known only one man in the room—her father. Now, there was no chance of being a wallflower at Exmoor, where a girl's card was made out beforehand, and she had that warm glow of predestined success from the very beginning of the festivity.

Molly and Judy were also invited and the girls were to go over to Exmoor on the 6.45 trolley with Dr. and Mrs. McLean and return on the 10.45 trolley, permission having been granted them to stay up until midnight. Three other

Wellington girls were bound for the dance on the same car. A young teacher chaperoned this little company, of which Judith Blount was one.

"I wonder that Judith Blount can make up her mind to go to a dance," Judy Kean remarked to Molly. "She's been in such a sullen rage for so long, she's turned quite yellow. I don't think she will enjoy it."

"It will do her good," answered Molly. "Dancing always makes people forget their troubles. Just trying to be graceful puts one in a good humor."

"The scientific reason is, child, that it stirs up one's circulation."

"And brooding is bad for the circulation," added Molly.

It had been a very gloomy holiday, the skies black and lowering and a dead, warm wind from the south. But there had been no sign of rain, and now, as they alighted from the car at Exmoor station, they noticed that the wind had shifted slightly to the east and freshened. The great blanket of frowning black had broken, and

a myriad of small clouds were flying across the face of the moon like a flock of frightened sheep. Molly shivered. She had often called herself a human barometer and her spirits were apt to shift with the wind.

"The wind has changed," she observed to the doctor. "I feel it in my bones."

"Correct," said the doctor, scanning the heavens critically. "There's no flavoring extract so strong as a drop of East wind. Let us hope it will hold back a bit until after the shindig."

With all its penetrating qualities, however, the drop of East wind did not affect the air in the beautiful old dining hall of Exmoor, used always for the larger entertainments. Its polished hardwood floor and paneled walls, its two great open fireplaces, in which immense back logs glowed cheerfully, made a picture that drove away all memory of bad weather.

Then the music struck up. The dancers whirled and circled. Nance was in a seventh heaven. Her cheeks glowed, her eyes shone, and

she seemed to float over the floor guided by the steady hand of young Andy; while his father looked on and smiled laconically.

"Every laddie maun hae his lassie," he observed to his wife, "and it's gude luck for him when he draws a plain one with a bonnie brown eye."

"She's not plain," objected Mrs. McLean.

"She has no furbelows in face nor dress that I can see," answered the doctor.

"They're just a boy and a girl, Andrew. Don't be anticipating. There's no telling how often they may change off before the settling time comes."

"And was it your ainsel' that changed so often?" asked the doctor, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Nay, nay, laddie," she protested, leaning on the doctor's arm affectionately, "but those were steadier days, I'm thinking."

"There's not so muckle change," said the doctor, "when it comes to sweethearting."

Many old-fashioned dances were introduced

that night: the cottage lancers, and Sir Roger de Coverly, led off by the doctor and his wife, whose old-world curtseys were very amusing to the young dancers.

And while the fun waxed fast and furious indoors, outside queer things were happening. The South wind, gently and insistently battling with the East wind, had conquered him for the moment. All the little clouds that had been scuttling across the heavens before the East wind's icy breath, now melted together into a tumbled, fleecy mass. Snowflakes were falling, softly and silently, clothing the campus and fields, the valleys and hills beyond in a blanket of white. Then the angry East wind returned from his lair with a new weapon: a drenching sheet of cold, penetrating rain, which changed to drops of ice as it fell and tapped on the high windows of the dining hall a warning rat-tat-tat quite drowned in the strains of music. The South wind, conquered and crushed, crept away and the East wind, summoning his brother from the North to share the fun, played a trick on the world which people in

that part of the country will not soon forget. Together they covered the soft, white blanket with a sheet of ice as hard and slippery as plate glass. At last, having enjoyed themselves immensely, they retired. Out came the moon again, shining in the frozen stillness, like a great round lantern.

In the meantime, the dance went on and joy was unconfined. Nobody had the faintest inkling of the drama which had been acted between the East and the South winds.

Most unconscious of all was Molly, who, having danced herself into a state of exuberant spirits, sat down to rest with Lawrence Upton in an ingle-nook of one of the big fireplaces. As chance would have it, they were joined by Judith Blount and a very dull young man, who, Lawrence informed Molly, had more money than brains. Judith had not noticed Molly at first. Probably she would never have chosen that particular spot if she had. But the destinies of these two girls had been ordained to touch at intervals in their lives and whenever the meeting occurred

something unfortunate always happened. They were exactly like two fluids which would not mix comfortably together. There was a general movement of partners for supper at this juncture and the two girls found themselves alone for the moment while their escorts departed for coffee and sandwiches.

"Are you having a good time?" Molly asked, glancing at Judith timidly.

She would have preferred to have said nothing whatever, but she had made a compact with herself to try and overcome her dislike for this girl whom she had distrusted from the moment of their first meeting at the railroad station when Mr. Murphy had given Molly's baggage check preference.

"Did I appear to be a wallflower?" demanded Judith insolently.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Molly. "I didn't mean that of course."

Then she sighed and turned toward the fire with a trembly, unnerved feeling.

"I don't believe I'll ever get used to having

people cross to me," she thought. "It always frightens me. I suppose I'm too sensitive." She began to shiver slightly. "The wind is surely in the East now," she added to herself.

When the young men came back bearing each a tray with supper for two, she was grateful for the cup of steaming coffee.

"Will you hold this for a minute, Miss Molly," asked Lawrence Upton, "while I get a chair to rest it on? Lap tables are about as unsteady as tables on shipboard."

Judith's partner had followed Lawrence's example, and presently the two students were seen hurrying through the throng, each pushing a chair in front of him. By some strange fatality, history was to repeat itself. Just as he reached the girls, the young person who had more money than brains slipped on a fragment of buttered bread which had fallen off somebody's plate, skidded along, bumped his chair into Lawrence, who lost his balance and fell against poor Molly's tray. Then, oh, dreadful calamity! over

went the cup of coffee straight onto Judith's yellow satin frock.

Molly could have sunk into the floor with the misery of that moment, and yet she had not in the least been the cause of the accident. It was the small-brained rich individual who was to blame. But Judith was not in any condition to reckon with original causes. Molly had been carrying the tray with the coffee cups and that was enough for her. She leapt to her feet, shaking her drenched dress and scattering drops of coffee in every direction.

"You awkward, clumsy creature!" she cried, stamping her foot as she faced Molly. "Why do you ever touch a coffee cup? Are you always going to upset coffee on me and my family? You have ruined my dress. You did it on purpose. I saw you were very angry a moment ago and you did it for revenge."

Molly shrank back in her seat, her face turning from crimson to white and back to crimson again.

"Don't answer her," said a small voice in her mind. "Be silent! Be silent!"

"But, Miss Blount," began her supper partner, feeling vaguely that justice must be done, "I stumbled, don't you know? Awfully awkward of me, of course, but I slipped on an infernal piece of banana peel or something and fell against Upton. Hope your gown isn't ruined."

"It is ruined," cried Judith, her face transformed with rage. "It's utterly ruined and she did it. It isn't the first time she's flung coffee cups around. Last winter she ruined my cousin's new suit of clothes. She's the most careless, awkward, clumsy creature I ever saw. I——"

A curious little group had gathered over near the fireplace, but Judith was too angry to care who heard what she was saying. In the meantime, Lawrence Upton had taken his stand between Judith and Molly, feeling somehow that he might protect poor Molly from the onslaught. Presently he took her hand and drew it through his arm.

"Suppose we join the McLeans," he said. "I

see they are having supper all together over there." As they turned to leave, he said to Judith in a cold, even voice that seemed to bring her back to her senses:

"I upset the coffee. Blanchard fell against me and joggled my arm. If there is any reparation I can make, I shall be glad to do it."

Whereupon, Judith departed to the dressing room and was not seen again until it was time to leave.

"What a tiger-cat she is!" whispered Lawrence to Molly, as he led her across the room.

Molly did not answer. She was afraid to trust her voice just then, and still more afraid of what she might say if she dared speak.

"What was all that rumpus over there?" demanded Judy when the young people had joined their friends.

"Oh, just a little volcanic activity on the part of Mount Ætna and a good deal of slinging of hot lava. Miss Molly and I are refugees from the eruption, and Mount Ætna has gone upstairs."

"You mean Miss Ætna Blount?" asked Judy.

"The same," said Lawrence.

When it was time for the Wellington party to catch the trolley car home, they emerged from the warm, cheerful dining hall into a world of dazzling whiteness. The trees were clothed in it, and the ground was covered with a crust of ice as hard and shining as marble.

A path of ashes was sprinkled before them, so that they walked safely as far as the station.

"Heaven help us at the other end," Mrs. McLean exclaimed, clinging to the doctor's arm.

The car was late in arriving at Exmoor station. At last it hove into sight, moving at a hesitating gait along the slippery rails. But it had a comfortably warm interior and they were glad to climb in out of the bitter cold.

"All aboard!" called the conductor. "Last car to-night."

There is always a gloomy fatality in the announcement, "Last car to-night." It is just as if a doctor might say: "Nothing more can be done."

Clang, clang, went the bell, and they moved slowly forward.

After an age of slipping and sliding, frequent stopping and starting and exchanges of loud confidences between the motorman and the conductor, the car came to a dead stop.

Dr. McLean, who had been sound asleep and snoring loudly, waked up.

"Bless my soul, are we there?" he demanded.

"No, sir, and far from it," answered the conductor, who had opened the door and come inside, beating his hands together for warmth.

"Far from it? What do you mean by that, my good man?" asked the doctor.

"There ain't no more power, sir," answered the man. "The trolley's just a solid cable of ice and budge she won't. You couldn't move her with a derrick."

"But what are we to do?" asked the doctor.

"I couldn't say, sir, unless you walked. It's only a matter of about two miles. Otherwise, you'd have to spend the night here and it'll be

a cold place. There ain't no more heat, is there, Jim?"

"There ain't," was Jim's brief reply.

"I guess Jim and I'll foot it into Wellington and the best you can do is to come along."

The doctor and his wife conferred with the young teacher who had chaperoned the other party. The question was, would it not be a greater risk to walk two miles in thin-soled shoes and party dresses over that wilderness of ice than to remain snugly in the car until they could get help? The motorman and conductor were well protected from the cold and from slipping, too, with heavy overcoats and arctic shoes. While they were talking, these two individuals took their departure, letting in a cold blast of air as they slid the door back to get out.

The Wellington crowd sat huddled together, hoping to keep warm by human contact. They tried to beguile the weary hours with conversation, but time dragged heavily and the car grew colder and colder. Some of the girls began to

move up and down, practicing physical culture exercises and beating their hands together.

"I think it would be better to walk," announced Mrs. McLean at last. "We are in much greater danger of freezing to death sitting here than moving. We'll stick to the track. It won't be so slippery between the rails."

Even the doctor was relieved at this suggestion, fearful as he was of slipping on the ice. The gude wife was right, as she always was, and the lassies had better take the risk and come along quickly. Before they realized it, they were on the track with faces turned hopefully toward Wellington. Scarcely had they taken six steps, before three of the girls tumbled flat, and while they were picking themselves up, Dr. and Mrs. McLean sat down plump on the ice, hand in hand, like two astonished children. It was quite impossible to keep from laughing at this ludicrous situation, especially when the doctor's great "haw-haw" made the air tremble. The ones who were standing helped the ones who had fallen to rise and fell themselves in the effort.

"If we only had on skates," cried Judy, "wouldn't it be glorious? We could skate anywhere, right across the fields or along the road. It's just like a sea of solid ice."

For an hour they took their precarious way along the track, which was now on the edge of a high embankment.

"A grand place for coasting," remarked Judy, peeping over the edge.

Suddenly her heels went over her head and her horrified friends beheld her sliding backwards down the hill.

"Are you hurt at all, my lass?" called the doctor, peeping fearfully over the side, and holding onto his wife as a drowning man catches at a life preserver.

"Hurt? No," cried Judy, convulsed with laughter.

"Do you think you can crawl back?" asked Mrs. McLean doubtfully.

Then Judy began the most difficult ascent of her life, on hands and knees. There was nothing

to take hold of and, when she had got half-way up, back she slipped to the bottom again.

A second time she had almost reached the top when she lost her footing and once more slipped to the base of the embankment.

"You'd better go on without me," she cried, half sobbing and half laughing.

The doctor was very uncomfortable. Not for worlds would he have put foot outside the trolley rails, but something had to be done.

"Let's make a human ladder," suggested Molly, "as they do in melodramas. I'll go first. Nance, you take my foot and someone hold on to yours and so on. Then, Judy can climb up, catching hold of us."

The doctor considered this a good scheme and the human chain was accordingly formed, the doctor himself grasping the ankle of the last volunteer, who happened to be Judith Blount. But hardly had Judy commenced the upward climb, when the doctor's heels went over his head and the entire human ladder found itself huddled together at the foot of the embankment.

"It's a case of every mon for himself and the divvel tak' the hindmost," exclaimed the doctor, sitting up stiffly and rubbing his shins. "Help yoursel's, lassies. I can do nae mair."

Some of them reached the track at last and some of them didn't, and those who couldn't make it were Molly and Judith Blount.

"You'll have to follow along as best you can down there," called Mrs. McLean, grasping her husband's arm. "We'll keep an eye on you from above."

Once more the belated revellers started on their way, while Molly and Judith Blount pursued a difficult path between a frozen creek and the trolley embankment.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GREAT SLEET OF 19—.

Many a fall and many a bruise they got that night as they crept along the frozen path. At last they reached a point where the creek had been turned abruptly from its bed and passed through a culvert under the embankment. Here the path also changed its course and headed for the golf links of the college.

"They can never get down the embankment and we can never get up," remarked Judith, who appeared to have forgotten that she had lately been a human volcano. "Why can't we take the short cut back? It couldn't be any worse than this."

"Why not?" answered Molly politely, although it must be confessed she was still tingling under the lash of Judith's flaying tongue, and not one word had she spoken since they left the others.

"Mrs. McLean," called Judith, making a trumpet of her hands, "we're going to cut across the golf links. It will be easier."

"But I'm afraid for you to go alone at this time of night," answered Mrs. McLean.

"What could harm them a night like this?" expostulated her husband.

"Very well, then. I suppose it's all right," said the distracted and wearied lady.

"Don't be uneasy, Mrs. McLean. You'll tak' the high road and we'll tak' the low, but we'll gang to Wellington afore ye," called Molly laughing.

After all, wasn't it absurd enough to make a body laugh—one man, eight helpless women slipping and sliding after him, and she herself making off in the darkness with the only enemy she had ever known! She wished it had been Judy or Nance. She was sure they would have giggled all the way. But who ever wanted to laugh in the presence of this black-browed, fierce-tempered Judith?

They walked silently on for some time, until they came to a little hill.

"I guess we'll have to crawl it," sighed Molly.

Long before this, they had pinned their long skirts up around their waists, and now, on hands and knees, they began the difficult ascent. Just as they reached the top, Molly's slipper bag somehow got away from her and went sliding to the bottom. Suddenly both girls began to laugh. They laughed until the echoes rang, and Molly, losing her grasp on a bush, went sliding after the bag.

"Oh," laughed Judith, "oh, Molly, I shall——" and then the twigs she had been clutching pulled out of the ice and down she went on top of Molly.

The two girls sat up and looked at each other. They felt warmer and happier from the laugh.

"Judith," exclaimed Molly, suddenly, "I could never laugh with any one like that and not be friends. It's almost like accepting hospitality. Shall we be friends again?"

"Oh, yes," replied Judith eagerly. "I am sorry I was rude to-night about the coffee, Molly. You

know it's my terrible temper. Once it gets a start, I can't seem to hold it in, and I've had a great deal to try me lately. I apologize to you now. Will you accept my apology?"

"Yes, indeed," Molly assured her. "Come along, let's try again. Once we get to the top of this little 'dis-incline,' as an old colored man at home would call it, we'll be on the links."

The girls both reached the summit at the same moment, and as they scanned the white expanse before them, they exclaimed in frightened whispers:

"There comes a man."

Instantly they slid back to the bottom again and lay in a heap, gasping and giggling.

"Where shall we go? What shall we do?" exclaimed Judith.

"Nothing," answered Molly. "We can hardly crawl, much less run, but I suppose he can't either, so perhaps we are as safe here as anywhere."

"But what man except a burglar could be

prowling around Wellington at this hour?" whispered Judith.

"I can't think of anyone, but I should think no sensible burglar would come out a night like this. Besides, do burglars ever come to Wellington?"

"Once there was one, only he wasn't a real burglar. He was a lunatic who had escaped from an asylum near Exmoor."

"Oh, heavens, Judith, a lunatic? I'd rather meet ten burglars. After all, only a lunatic would come out on such a night. Can't we run?"

Molly had a fear of crazy people that she had never been able to conquer.

They rose unsteadily on their frozen feet and began hurrying back in the direction of the trolley embankment. As they ran, they heard a long, sliding, scraping sound. Evidently the man had slid down the little hill. They could hear the sound of his footsteps on the ice. He was running after them. At last he called:

"Wait, wait, whoever you are. I'm not going to hurt you."

In another moment he had caught up with them. Oh, joy of joys, it was Professor Green, wearing a thick gray sweater and a cap with ear muffs. With a cry of relief, Judith flung herself on her cousin's neck while Molly rather timidly clasped his arm. She felt she could have hugged him, too, if he had only been a relation.

"We thought you were an escaped lunatic," she exclaimed.

"I am," he answered, "at least I've been nearly crazy trying to get news of you." He took her hand and drew it firmly through his arm, while Judith appropriated his other arm. "They telephoned over from Exmoor to know if you had reached Wellington safely. We found at the village that the car had not arrived. Then about twenty minutes ago they called us from the car station to say that the conductor and motorman had walked but that you had decided to remain in the car all night. I thought I had better go over and persuade you not to freeze to death by degrees. I am glad you decided to walk. Where are the others?"

"They have gone on by the track," answered Molly. "We slipped down the embankment and couldn't crawl up again. Perhaps you could catch them, if you branched off here and took the other road."

"Never mind," answered the Professor, tucking her arm more tightly through his. "Dr. McLean can look after the others, now that his burdens are lightened by two. I'd better see you across this skating rink. Mrs. Murphy is up waiting for you. I stopped and told her to get hot soup and water bottles and things ready."

"You're a dear, Cousin Edwin," exclaimed Judith. "You are always thinking of other people."

"I expect the old doctor will be a good deal knocked up by this little jaunt," went on the Professor, not taking the slightest notice of Judith's expressions of gratitude, the first Molly had ever heard her make about anything.

It was half-past two o'clock when they reached Queen's Cottage, just ten minutes before the others arrived.

"It's a good thing you found us," Molly said to the Professor as he helped them up the steps. "I believe we'd have been crawling over those links another hour or so if you hadn't."

"I can never explain what made me cut across the links," he answered. "I had my face turned toward the other road when something urged me to go that way."

Dr. McLean always insisted that it was continuous giggling that kept them all from freezing that bitter night. Judith Blount was the only one in the party who suffered from the experience. She spent a week in the Infirmary with a deep cold and sore throat.

"You see," explained Judy Kean sagely to her two friends, "her system was weakened by that awful fit of temper; she lost all mental and bodily poise and took the first disease that came her way."

"She certainly lost all bodily poise," laughed Molly. "I didn't have any more than she did. We slipped around like two helpless infants."

"But you didn't take cold," said Judy.

"I've made up my mind not to have any colds this winter," announced Molly seriously. "After all, there's a good deal in just declining to entertain them. I think the grip is a sort of bully who attacks people who are afraid of him and keeps away from the ones who are not cowards."

The three girls spent half a day in bed sleeping off their weariness, and on Friday afternoon they were able to call on Mrs. McLean, who, being a hardy Scotchwoman, was none the worse from the walk. The doctor, she said, had been up since seven o'clock attending to his patients.

"The truth is," she added, "he would not have missed the sight for anything—the whole world turned into a skating rink and the campus the centre of it."

Everybody in Wellington who could wear skates was out that afternoon. The campus and golf links, as well as the lake, were covered with circling, gliding figures. The best skaters coasted down hill on their skates, as men do on snow shoes. They went with incredible speed and the

impetus carried them up the next hill without any effort.

Molly had seen very little skating at home. She had learned as a child, but as she grew up the sport had not appealed to her, because somebody was always falling in and the ice never lasted longer than a day or so. Now, however, the picture of the circling, swaying crowd of skaters thrilled her with a new desire to see if she had forgotten how to balance herself on steel runners.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she cried. "I never saw anything so graceful. They are like birds. First they soar. Then they flap their wings and soar again."

"Flap their feet, you mean," interrupted Judy, "and woe to her who flops instead of flaps."

Mary Stewart came sailing up to them, gave a beautiful curving turn and then stopped.

"Isn't this glorious sport?" she cried, her cheeks glowing with exercise. "Has your President told you about the skating carnival? It's just been decided, and I suppose you haven't seen

her yet. It's to take place to-morrow night. Won't it be beautiful?"

"What fun!" cried Molly. "What a wonderful sight!"

"Now, Molly, you are to wrap up very warm," continued Mary, "no matter what kind of a costume you decide to wear. No cheesecloth Liberty masquerades will go, remember."

"Oh, but I can't be in the carnival. I haven't any skates," said Molly.

"I have another pair," answered Mary quickly. "I'll bring them over to you later."

Molly never guessed that this loving friend skated straight down to the village that very instant and bought a pair of skates screwed onto stout shoes at the general store. Tossing away the wrapping paper and smearing the shoes with snow and ashes to take off the new look, she delivered them at Queen's before supper.

"It's lucky I knew what number Molly wore," she said to herself, as she sailed up the campus on her Canadian skates, with strokes as sweepingly broad and generous as her own fine nature.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SKATING CARNIVAL.

All fears of a thaw on the heels of this unprecedented cold wave were put to flight next morning. The thermometer hovered at four degrees above zero and the air was dry and sparkling. Only those who remained indoors and lingered over the registers felt the cold.

There was a great deal to be done before evening. Costumes had to be devised, bonfires built along the lake and at intervals on the links, lanterns hung everywhere possible and, lastly, a quick rehearsal. The best skaters were chosen to give exhibitions of fancy skating; there were to be several races and a grand march.

Molly learned the night before that a sense of balance having once been acquired is never lost. After supper she had ventured out on the campus with Judy and Nance, who were both excellent

skaters. With a grace that was peculiarly her own in spite of the first unsteadiness, Molly had been able to skate to the Quadrangle. There, removing her skating shoes, and putting on slippers, she had skipped upstairs to thank Mary Stewart for her kindness. The return to Queen's over the campus had been even easier, and next morning she felt that she could enter the carnival.

Nobody had a chance to talk about costumes until after lunch on Saturday, when there was a meeting of the three friends to decide.

"I don't see how I can go. I haven't a thing picturesque," exclaimed Nance dejectedly.

"Now, Nance, you have no imagination," said Judy.

"One day you tell me I have no sense of humor, and another that I have no imagination. You'll be telling me I have no brains next."

"Here, eat this and stop quarreling," interrupted Molly, thrusting a plate of fudge before them. "When in doubt, eat fudge and wisdom will come."

Judy ate her fudge in silence. Then suddenly she cried exultantly.

"Eureka! Wisdom hath come, yea even to the humble in spirit. Heaven hath enlightened me. I know what we'll wear, girls."

"What?" they demanded, having racked their brains in vain to think of something both warm and picturesque.

"We'll go," continued Judy impressively, "as three Russian princesses."

"What in?"

"Leave that to me. You just do as I tell you. Nance, skate down to the village and buy a big roll of cotton batting. Make them wrap it up well, so as not to offer suggestions to others."

"What must I do?" asked Molly.

"You must turn up the hems of skirts. Take your old last winter's brown one, and Nance's old green one, and—and my velvet one——"

"Your best skirt!" exclaimed Nance aghast.

"Yes, why not? We only live once," replied the reckless Judy. "Turn up the hems all around

and baste them. They should reach just to the shoetops."

That afternoon they hurriedly sewed bands of cotton batting around the bottoms of their skirts, bordered their jackets with it, made cuffs and muffs and high turbans. Then Judy dotted the cotton with shoe blacking and it became a realistic imitation of royal ermine. Each girl wore a band of brilliant ribbon across the front of her coat with a gilt pasteboard star pinned to it.

"I suppose this might be taken for the Order of the Star and Garter," observed Judy. "At any rate, we are royal princesses of the illustrious house of Russia, the Princesses Molitzka, Nanitska and Judiekeanovitch. Those are Russian enough, aren't they?"

Never will Molly forget the fun of that glorious evening, nor the beautiful picture of the meadows and fields dazzling white in the moonlight. While the "workers" of the four classes lit the fires and lanterns, the "drones" circled about on the ice singing college songs. From over at Exmoor came a crowd of youths who had

skated the ten miles up-hill and down-dale to see the carnival. Sleighing parties from nearby estates drove over with rough-shod teams to draw the sleighs, and all Wellington turned out to see the sights.

"I didn't believe there could be so much originality in the world," thought Molly, admiring the costumes of the students.

There were many Teddy Bears and Bunny Rabbits. One girl wore a black velvet suit with a leopard's skin over her shoulder. On her head was a mythological looking crown with a pair of cow's horns standing upright at each side. There were numerous Russian Gypsies and two Dr. Cooks wearing long black mustaches, each carrying a little pole with an American flag nailed at the top.

Jessie Lynch, not being a skater, sat in a chair on runners, while her good-natured chum, Margaret Wakefield, pushed her about the lake. Margaret wore a Chinese costume and her long queue was made of black skirt braid.

After the parade and the exhibitions of skat-

ing, there was general skating and the lake became a scene of changing color and variety.

"It's like a gorgeous Christmas card," thought Molly, practicing strokes by herself in one corner while she watched the circle of skaters skim by her. "And how very light it is. I can plainly recognize Nance going over the hill with Andy McLean."

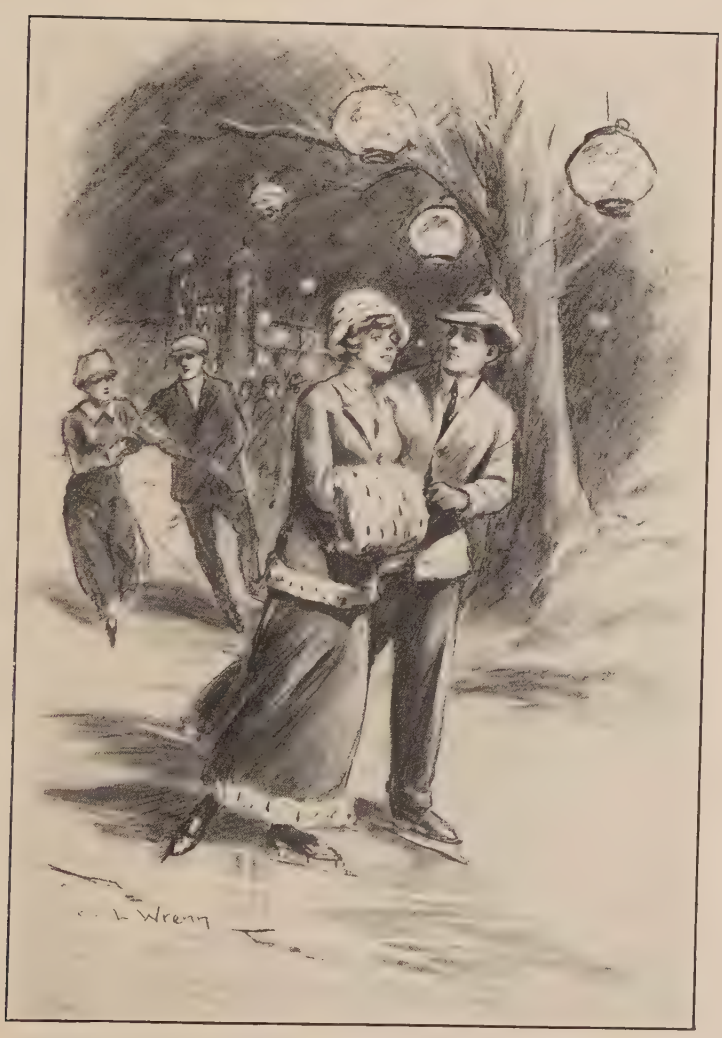
"Here she is," called Lawrence Upton, breaking from the circle and skating towards her as easily, apparently, as a bird flies. His body leaned slightly. His hands were clasped behind his back, and Mercury with his winged shoes could not have moved more gracefully.

"Come on, Miss Molly, and have a turn," he said.

"What, me, the poorest skater on the pond?"

"Nonsense! You couldn't dance so well if you were a poor skater. Just cross hands like this and sail along. I won't let you fall."

Off they did sail and never was a more delightful sensation than Molly's, flying over the smooth ice with this good-looking young Mercury.



AROUND AND ROUND THEY SKIMMED.—*Page* 174.

Around and round they skimmed, until one of the Exmoor boys blew a horn, the signal that it was time to start the ten miles back to college. Very rough skating it was in places, so Lawrence informed Molly; rather dangerous going down some of the steep hills, but glorious fun.

"Why don't you do like Baron Munchausen on the mountain? Sit on a silk handkerchief and slide down," suggested Molly.

"We have done some sliding of that kind," he answered, laughing, "but it was accidental and there was no time to get out a pocket handkerchief."

At last the great carnival was over, and Molly, falling in with a crowd of campus girls, started for home, singing with the others:

"Good-night, ladies, we're gwine to leave you now."

It was nearly ten when she tramped upstairs, still on her skates. Judy called out to her from her room, but Nance had not returned. Molly unlaced the skating boots, removed the Russian Princess costume, and flinging her time-worn

eiderdown cape around her shoulders, sat down to toast her toes.

"Judy," she called presently, "what have you done with Nance?"

"The last I saw of the Lady Nance she was going over the hill with her sandy-haired cavalier."

"I saw her, too, but I haven't met up with her since. I'm afraid she will get a 'calling' if she isn't back pretty soon."

The girls waited silently. Presently they heard the last of the carnival revellers return. The clock in the tower struck ten. Mrs. Markham locked the hall door and put out the hall light, and still no Nance.

"She's gone off skating with Sandy Andy and forgot the time," whispered Judy, who had crept into Molly's room to confer. "It's a good joke on proper old Nance. I think she was never known to break a rule before."

"You don't suppose anything could have happened to them, do you?"

"Of course not. But you know how absorbed

they do get in conversation. They wouldn't hear a cannon go off a yard away."

"They are awfully strict here about being out with boys," observed Molly uneasily. "I do wish she would come home."

The girls lingered over the register talking in whispers until the clock struck half-past ten.

"Molly, suppose they have eloped!" Judy observed.

"Eloped!" repeated Molly, amazed. Then she began to laugh. "Judy, is there anybody in the world so romantic as you? Why, they are mere infants. Andy isn't nineteen yet and Nance was only eighteen last month. I think we'd better slip out and find them. Come on."

Very quietly the two girls got into their things. They wore their rubbers this time, and Molly very thankfully carried the imitation ermine muff. The entire household was sound asleep when out into the sparkling, glittering world they crept like two conspirators.

"Suppose we try the links first," suggested

Judy, "since both of us saw them disappearing last in that direction."

"If we were really ladylike persons we'd be afraid to go scurrying off here in the dark," observed Molly.

"I'm not afraid of anything," Judy replied, and Molly knew she spoke the truth, for Judy was the most fearless girl she had ever known.

When they reached the summit of the hill, they began calling at the tops of their voices, "Nance! Nance Oldham!"

There was no answer and not in all the broad expanse of whiteness could they see a human being.

"I wish I knew what to do," exclaimed Molly, growing more and more uneasy. "Suppose she has been injured—suppose—suppose——"

"There they are!" cried Judy. "The young rascals, I believe they are utterly oblivious to time."

Far over the ice appeared the two figures. They were not skating but walking, and several

times before they reached the girls they slipped and fell down.

"You are a nice pair," cried Judy. "Don't you know it's way after hours and everybody is in bed long ago?"

"Why, Nance, dear, what has happened? Why are you walking?" asked Molly, who was rarely known to scold anybody.

"I am very sorry," said Nance stiffly. "I couldn't help it. The heel of my shoe came off and I couldn't skate. Mr. McLean——"

Judy smiled mischievously.

"They've been quarreling," she said under her breath.

"And Mr. McLean had to bring me back much against his will."

"Nothing of the sort, Miss Oldham," put in "Mr." McLean, flushing angrily. "I was very glad to bring you back. I only said——"

"Never mind what you said. It was your manner. Actions speak louder than words."

"Come along," put in Molly. "This is no time for quarrels. It's after eleven. Andy, what will

you do? Skate back to Exmoor or stay at your father's?"

"I shall skate back, of course," he answered in an heroic voice. "The other fellows might think something had happened to me."

"Here, Nance, put on one of my overshoes," said Judy. "That will keep you from slipping and we must hasten e'er the midnight chime doth strike. Farewell, Andrew. God bless you, and a safe journey, my boy."

Judy struck a dramatic attitude and Molly was obliged to laugh, in spite of the serious faces of the others.

"Hadn't I better see you home?" asked Andrew stiffly.

"Forsooth, no, good gentleman. Begone, and the sooner the better."

"Come on, you silly goose," laughed Molly, and the three girls hurried home. Once they stopped to look back, and young Andy, skating as if the foul fiends were after him, was almost at the end of the course.

There was no Miss Steel that winter to keep

a sharp ear open for late-comers and the girls crept safely up to bed. Twice in the night Molly heard Nance weeping bitterly. But she said nothing because she knew that such quarrels are soon mended.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE THAW.

Next day began the thaw and in a week the whole earth appeared to have melted into an unpleasant muddy-colored liquid. An icy dampness permeated the air. It chilled the warmth of the soul and changed the hue of existence to a sad gray.

Judy and Molly were prepared to see Nance thaw with the great sleet and melt into little rivulets of feeling and remorse. She had seemed rather hard on Andy, junior, that night; but Nance remained implacable and had no word to say on the subject.

"She's as ice-bound as ever," exclaimed Judy, shaking her head ruefully. "I am afraid she still belongs to the glacial period. Don't you think you can warm her up a little and make her forgive poor Andy?"

"Perhaps the sun will do it," said Molly, lifting her skirts as she waded through the slush on the campus.

The two girls were on their way to a class and there was no time to linger for discussions about Nance's unforgiving nature. But there was nothing Judy enjoyed more than making what she learnedly termed "psychological speculations" concerning her friends' sentiments.

"Do stop tearing along, Molly, while I talk. I have something interesting to say."

"Judy Kean, there must be a depression on your head where there should be a perfectly good bump of duty. Don't you know we have only five minutes to get to the class? I'd rather be late to almost anything that Lit. II."

"And why, pray?" demanded Judy, rushing to keep up with Molly's long steps.

"Oh, well, because it's interesting."

"Is that the only reason?"

"Why don't you turn into a period occasionally, Juliana? You are every other variety of punctuation mark,—dashes, exclamations, inter-

rogations. Sometimes you're a comma and I've known you to be a semicolon, but when, oh, when have you come to a full stop?"

"All this long peroration——"

"Pero—what?"

"Means that you are avoiding the real question."

"Here we are," ejaculated Molly with a sigh of relief as she ran upstairs and entered the class room at the same moment that Professor Green appeared from another door.

Molly freely admitted to her friends that English Literature was the most interesting study she had. She took more pains over the preparation for this class than for any of her other lessons. She was always careful not to be late, but then sat timidly and modestly in the back row with the girls who wished to avoid being called upon to recite. The Professor's lectures, however, led her into an enchanted country, the land of poetry and romance. Perhaps, at first, he thought she really wished to avoid being questioned and that her spellbound expression was

only indifference. Certainly he had seldom tested her interest until one day during a lecture on the Pre-Raphaelite artists and poets he calmly requested her to stand up before the entire class and read Rossetti's "Blessed Damozel." Blushing hotly, she began the reading in a thin, frightened voice, but presently the amused faces of her friends faded away; her voice regained its full measure of strength and beauty, and when she had finished, she became aware that somewhere hidden within the wellsprings of her mind was a power she had not known of before. Molly's classmates were much impressed by her performance, but there was a faint smile on the Professor's face that seemed to imply that he was not in the least surprised.

Among all the little happenings that infest our daily lives it is often the least and most accidental that wields the strongest influence. This chance discovery by Molly that she could read poetry aloud gave her infinite secret pleasure. She began to memorize and repeat to herself all her favorite poems. Sometimes her pulses beat

time to the rhythm in her head; even her speech at such times became unconsciously metrical, and as she walked she felt her body swing to the music of the verse. With a strange shyness she hid this secret from her friends, who never guessed when she sat quietly with them that she was chanting poetry to herself.

Molly had planned to do several errands that afternoon, after the class in Lit. II. The first one took her to the village to see Madeleine Petit, the little Southern girl, who was willing to do almost any kind of work to earn money. Molly had never returned the magazine clippings of prize offers, and she had also another reason for wanting to see Madeleine. She wished to find out just how different life in a room over the post-office was from life at Queen's. She was thankful when the lesson was over, that Judy was engaged for basket-ball practice in the gym., for she wished to be alone when she made this call.

Only a few days before, Miss Walker had called to her after chapel and suggested that she look over the rooms the postmistress rented to

students, and make her choice so that lodgings could be spoken for before Christmas.

Molly paused at Madeleine's door and read the sign carefully.

"I suppose I shall have to be fixing up something like that," she thought, "only I never could do up jabots and I'd rather scrub floors than shampoo people's heads."

"Come in," called the liquid, melting voice of the Southern girl in answer to Molly's tap. "Oh, how do you do? What a delightful, welcome surprise," cried the hospitable little person. "Put your feet over the register. That's where I spend most of my time now. I'm not used to this awful climate. Now, give me your hat and coat. You're to have tea with me, you know. You won't mind if I go on working, will you? I'm doing up some jabots and things for that sweet Miss Stewart. She has given me a lot of work. Such a lady, if she is a Yankee! I can safely say that to you because you aren't one, you know. But, really, I'm beginning to like these Northern girls so much. They are quite as nice as the

girls from home, only quieter," rattled on Miss Petit.

Molly groaned inwardly.

"If she only didn't talk so much," she thought. "I'm always putting up milestones during her ramblings to remind me of something I wanted to say, but there's never any chance to go back, even if I could remember where I put them."

"I wanted to return these clippings," she managed to edge in at last, producing the slips of papers.

"Oh, you needn't have bothered. I shall never use any of them. I told you there was nothing but mathematics in my soul. I can't write at all. The themes are the horror of my life. But you tried, I am sure. Was it the short story or one of the advertising ones? They are all of them terribly unsatisfactory because you never know where you stand until months and months afterwards when you read that somebody has won the prize. But, of course, I never expect to win prizes. I could never make a *coup de tête* like that."

"You could make a *coup de* tongue," thought Molly, sighing helplessly.

"But did you try?" asked Madeleine, now actually pausing for a reply to her question.

"I did try one of them, a little poem that came into my head, but it was weeks ago and I know nothing will come of it. I felt when I sent it off that it wasn't the kind of thing they wanted, wasn't advertisey enough. I had really almost forgotten I wrote it, so many other things have happened since. Can you keep a secret, Miss Petit?"

"I certainly can," replied the busy little creature, pausing in her labors to test the iron. "Dear me, I must be careful not to scorch any of these pretty things. But the tea kettle is boiling. Suppose we have some refreshment and you can tell me the secret in comfort."

Molly smiled at her own Southern peculiarities cropping out in this little friend.

"Mommer sent me this caramel cake yesterday. It's made from a very old recipe. I hope you'll like the tea. I'm sorry I can't offer you any real

cream. I would just as soon eat cold cream for the complexion as condensed cream. It's all right for cooking with, but it doesn't go well with tea and coffee, which I always make in my own rooms, especially coffee. It's never strong enough at the place I take my meals. But you said something about a secret?"

Somehow Molly's affairs seemed to dwindle into insignificance in comparison with this great tidal wave of conversation, and she resolved not to take Madeleine into her confidence after all. It occurred to her that she would soon become a raving maniac if she lived next door to anyone who talked as much as that.

"It's really not much of a secret," answered Molly lightly. "Miss Walker asked me to come down and look over some empty rooms here for someone, and I thought, maybe, if you could spare the time you would come with me."

"I can always spare the time to be of service to you," exclaimed Madeleine. "You have done so much for me. You really gave me my start here, you know."

"Nonsense!" put in Molly.

"Yes, you did. You sent Miss Stewart to me and introduced me to some of the older girls, who have all been very nice. They would probably never have heard of me but for you."

When they had finished the tea and cake, which were delicious, they inspected the vacant rooms, to a steady accompaniment of Madeleine's conversation. Molly wondered how the capable, clever, industrious little creature could accomplish so much when her tongue went like a clap-hammer most of the time. But there was no doubt that she achieved marvels and was already well up in her classes. Poor Molly's temples ached with the steady hum. Her tongue was dry and she had a wild impulse to jump out the window. How could she explain to kind Miss Walker that she could not live over the post-office? Would it not be an unfriendly act to tell the real reason?

"It's bad enough as it is," she thought, "leaving my sweet old Queen's, but this would be beyond human endurance. It will have to be a

room over the general store or at Mrs. O'Reilly's. Anything but this."

The post-office rooms were bare and crude, and poor Molly was sick at heart when at last she took her leave of the little friend, who was still babbling unceasingly when the door closed.

Molly breathed a deep sigh of relief as she waded through the slush on the sidewalk.

"It will be a good deal like being banished from the promised land," she said to herself, "wherever it is."

Pausing at the door of the general store, she noticed a big, black, funereal-looking vehicle coming up the street at a slow pace. Passers-by paused to look at it, with a kind of morbid curiosity, as it drew nearer.

"Oh, heavens, I hope that isn't an undertaker's wagon," Molly thought, preparing to flee from the dread sight which always filled her with the horrors. The big vehicle passed slowly by. On the front seat with the driver sat Dr. McLean. He bowed to her gravely, barely lifting his hat. "One of his patients," her thoughts continued,

"but it's strange for him to ride on the same wagon. I don't think I can possibly look at those other rooms today."

She turned her face away from the general store and hastened back to the University, which seemed to be the only thing that retained its dignity and beauty under the disenchanting influences of this muggy, damp day. As she walked up the avenue, there some distance ahead was the gruesome equipage.

"Heavens! Heavens! I haven't heard about anything," she exclaimed.

The wagon did not pause at the Infirmary as she expected, but pursued its way until it reached the McLean house. Molly began to run, and just as she arrived breathless and excited, the vehicle had backed up to the steps, two doors swung open, and Mrs. McLean, accompanied by a trained nurse, stepped out. The doctor climbed down from one side of the vehicle and the driver from the other. Professor Green sprung up from somewhere,—he had probably been waiting in the McLeans' hall—and the three

men gently lifted out a stretcher on which lay the almost unrecognizable form of Andy, junior. A large bandage encircled his head and one arm was done up in splints.

"Oh, Mrs. McLean," whispered Molly, "I didn't know——"

But Mrs. McLean only shook her head and hurried after the stretcher.

Molly sat down on the muddy steps and waited. After what seemed an age, Professor Green emerged from the house.

"You are a reckless girl to sit there in all that dampness," he exclaimed.

"Never mind me. What about Andy?"

"He's in pretty bad shape, I am afraid," answered the Professor. "He was hurt the night of the carnival in some way. I don't know just how it happened that he lost the others. At any rate, they found him after a long hunt half frozen to death, a gash in his head, and several broken bones. They thought they had better bring him home, where the doctor could look

after him, but he hasn't stood the journey as well as they hoped."

"Poor Nance!" said Molly, as she hastened back to Queen's.

CHAPTER XIV.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

"Oh, Molly, what was that awful black wagon that went up the avenue a few minutes ago?" demanded half a dozen voices as she opened the door into her own room.

"The freshman at the Infirmary who was threatened with typhoid fever is getting well," remarked Margaret Wakefield.

"Surely, nothing has happened to any of the Wellington girls?" put in Jessie uneasily.

"No, no," answered Molly, "nothing so terrible as that, thank goodness. It wasn't an undertaker's wagon, but an ambulance." She paused. It would be rather hard on Nance to tell the news about Andy before all the girls.

"It looked something like the Exmoor ambulance," here observed Katherine Williams.

Molly was silent. Suppose she should tell the

sad news and Nance should break down and make a scene. It would be cruel. "I'll wait until they go," she decided. But this was not easy.

"Who was in the ambulance, Molly?" asked Judy impatiently. "I should think you would have had curiosity enough to have noticed where it stopped."

It was no use wrinkling her eyebrows at Judy or trying to evade her direct questions. The inquisitive girl went on:

"Wasn't that Dr. McLean on the seat with the driver?"

"Naturally he would be there, being the only physician in Wellington," replied Molly.

Then Lawyer Wakefield began a series of cross-questions that fairly made the poor girl quail.

"In which direction were you going when you met the ambulance?" asked this persistent judge.

"I was coming this way, of course."

"And you mean to say your curiosity didn't prompt you to turn around and see where the ambulance stopped?"

"I didn't say that," faltered Molly, feeling very much like a prisoner at the bar.

"You did turn and look then? Was it toward the faculty houses or the Quadrangle that the ambulance was driving?"

"Well, really, Judge Wakefield, I think I had better seek legal advice before replying to your questions."

Margaret laughed.

"I only wanted to prove to myself that the only way to get at the truth of a matter is by a system of questions which require direct answers. It's like the game of 'Twenty Questions,' which is the most interesting game in the world when it's properly played. Once I guessed the ring on the Pope's finger in six questions just by careful deduction. It's easier to get at the truth by subtracting than adding——"

"Truth, indeed. You haven't got a bit nearer than any of us," burst in the incorrigible Judy. "With all your legal mind you haven't made Molly tell us who was in the ambulance, and of

course she knows. She has never said she didn't, yet."

Molly felt desperately uncomfortable. She wished now that she had told them in the beginning. It had only made matters worse not to tell.

"Molly, you are the strangest person. What possible reason could you have for keeping secret who was in the ambulance? Was it one of the students or one of the faculty?" demanded Nance.

"People who live in the country say that calves are the most inquisitive creatures in the world, but I think girls are," remarked Molly.

"This is as good as a play," cried one of the Williams girls, " a real play behind footlights, to sit here and look on at this little comedy of curiosity. You've asked every conceivable question under the sun, and Molly there has never told a thing. Now I happen to know that the ambulance is connected with the sanitarium over near Exmoor. I saw it once when we were walking, and it is therefore probably bringing someone from Exmoor here. Then if you wish to

inquire further by the 'deductive method,' as Judge Wakefield calls it: who at Exmoor has connections at Wellington?"

"Dodo Green and Andy McLean," said Judy quickly.

"Exactly," answered Edith.

Nance's eyes met Molly's and in a flash she understood why her friend had been parrying the questions of the other girls. It was to save her from a shock.

Perhaps some of the other girls recognized this, too, for Margaret and the Williamses rose at the same moment and made excuses to go, and the others soon followed. Only blundering and thoughtless Judy remained to blunder more.

"Molly Brown," she exclaimed, "you have been getting so full of mysteries and secrets lately that you might as well live in a tower all alone. Now, why——"

"Is he very badly hurt, Molly?" interrupted Nance in a cold, even voice, not taking the slightest notice of Judy's complaints.

"Pretty badly, Nance. The journey over from

Exmoor was harder on him than they thought it would be. I stood beside the stretcher for a minute."

Nance walked over to the side window and looked across the campus in the direction of the McLean house. On the small section of the avenue which could be seen from that point she caught a glimpse of the ambulance making its return trip to Exmoor.

She turned quickly and went back to her chair.

"It looks like a hearse," she said miserably.

"Is it Andy?" asked Judy of Molly in a whisper.

Molly nodded her head.

"What a chump I've been!" ejaculated Judy.

"It happened the night of the carnival, of course," pursued Nance.

"Yes."

"It was all my fault," she went on quietly. "I would coast down one of those long hills and Andy didn't want me to. I knew I could, and I wanted to show him how well I could skate. Then, just as we got to the bottom, my heel came off

and we both tumbled. It didn't hurt us, but Andy was provoked, and then we quarreled. Of course, walking back made us late and he missed the others."

"But, dear Nance, it might have happened just the same, even if he had been with the others," argued Molly.

"No, it couldn't have been so bad. He must have been lying in the snow a long time before they found him, and was probably half frozen," she went on, ruthlessly inflicting pain on herself.

"They did go back and find him, fortunately," admitted Molly.

"He was the first and only boy friend I have ever had," continued Nance in a tone of extreme bitterness. "I always thought I was a wallflower until I met him. Other girls like you two and Jessie have lots of friends and can spare one. But I haven't any to spare. I only have Andy." Her voice broke and she began to sob, "Oh, why was I so stubborn and cruel that night?"

Judy crept over and locked the door. She was sore in mind and body at sight of Nance's misery.

"I feel like a whipped cur," she thought. "Just as if someone had beaten me with a stick. Poor old Nance!"

"You mustn't feel so hopeless about it, Nance dear," Molly was saying. "I'm sure he'll pull through. They wouldn't have brought him all this distance if he had been so badly off."

"They have brought him home to die!" cried Nance fiercely. "And I did it. I did it!" she rocked herself back and forth. "I want to be alone," she said suddenly.

"Of course, dear Nance, no one shall disturb you," said Molly, taking a pile of books off the table and a "Busy" sign, which she hung on the door. "We'll bring up your supper. Don't come down this evening."

But when the girls returned some hours later with a tray of food, Nance had gone to bed and turned her face to the wall, and she refused to eat a morsel. All next day it was the same. Nance remained in bed, ruthlessly cutting lessons and refusing to take anything but a cup of soup at lunch time. The girls called at Dr. McLean's

to inquire for Andy and found that his condition was much the same. Nance's condition was the same, too. She turned a deaf ear to all their arguments and declined to be reasoned with.

"She can't lie there forever," Judy exclaimed at last.

"But what are we to do, Judy?" Molly asked. "She's just nursing her troubles until she'll go into melancholia! I would go to Mrs. McLean, but she won't see anyone and the doctor is too unhappy to listen. I tried to tell him about Nance and he didn't hear a word I was saying. I didn't realize how much they adored Andy."

Judy could offer no suggestion and Molly went off to the Library to think.

It occurred to her that Professor Green might give her some advice. He knew all about the friendship between Nance and Andy, and, besides, he had interested himself once before in Nance's troubles when he arranged for her to go to the McLeans' supper party the year before. Molly glanced at the clock. It was nearly half-past four.

"He'll probably be in his little cloister study right now," she said to herself, and in three minutes she was rapping on the oak door in the corridor marked "E. Green."

"Come in," called the Professor.

He was sitting at his study table, his back turned to her, writing busily.

"You're late, Dodo," he continued, without looking up. "I expected you in time for lunch. Sit down and wait. I can't stop now. Don't speak to me for fifteen minutes. I'm finishing something that must go by the six o'clock mail."

Molly sank into the depths of the nearest chair while the Professor's pen scratched up and down monotonously. Not since the famous night of her Freshman year when she was locked in the cloisters had she been in the Professor's sanctum, and she looked about her with much curiosity.

"I wish I had one just like it," she thought. "It's so peaceful and quiet, just the place to work in and write books on 'The Elizabethan Drama,' and lyric poetry, and comic operas——"

There was a nice leathery smell in the atmosphere of book bindings mingled with tobacco smoke, and the only ornament she could discover, except a small bronze bust of Voltaire and a life mask of Keats, was a glazed paper weight in the very cerulean blue she herself was so fond of. It caught the fading light from the window and shone forth from the desk like a bit of blue sky.

Molly was sitting in a high back leather chair, which quite hid her from Judith Blount, who presently, knocking on the door and opening it at the same moment, entered the room like a hurricane.

"Cousin Edwin, may I come in? I want to ask you something——"

"I can't possibly see you now, Judith. You must wait until to-morrow. I'm very busy."

"Oh, pshaw!" exclaimed the girl and banged the door as she departed into the corridor.

What a jarring element she was in all that peaceful stillness! The muffled noises in the

Quadrangle seemed a hundred miles away. Molly rose and tiptoed to the door.

"He'll be angrier than ever if he should find me here," she thought. "I'll just get out quietly and explain some other time."

Her hand was already on the doorknob when the Professor wheeled around and faced her.

"Why, Miss Brown," he exclaimed, "was it you all the time? I might have known my clumsy brother couldn't have been so quiet."

"Please excuse me," faltered Molly. "I am sure you are very busy. I am awfully sorry to have disturbed you."

"Nonsense! It's only unimportant things I won't be bothered with, like the absurd questions Judith thinks up to ask me and Dodo's gossip about the fellows at Exmoor. But I am well aware that you never waste time. I suspect you of being one of the busiest little ladies in Wellington."

Molly smiled. Somehow, she liked to be called a "little lady" by this distinguished professor.

"But your letter that must go by the six mail?"

"That can wait until morning," he said.

He had just said it was to go at six, but, of course, he had a right to change his mind.

"Sit down and tell me what's the trouble. Have you had bad news from home?"

"No, it's about Nance," she began, and told him the whole story. "You see," she finished, "Nance has had so few friends, and she is very fond of Andy. Because she thinks the accident was her fault, she is just grieving herself into an awful state."

The Professor sat with his chin resting on his hand.

"Poor little girl!" he said. "And the Doctor and Mrs. McLean are in almost as bad a state themselves. You know it's just a chance that Andy will pull through. He has developed pneumonia."

"Oh, dear, with all those broken bones and that terrible gash! Isn't it dreadful?"

"Pretty bad. Have you tried talking to Miss Oldham?"

"I've tried everything and nothing will move

her. It's just a kind of stubborn misery that seems to have paralyzed her, mind and body."

The two sat in silence for a moment, then the Professor said:

"Suppose I go down to Queen's to-night and see Miss Oldham? Do you think she could be induced to come down into Mrs. Markham's sitting room and have a talk with me?"

"I should think so. She wouldn't have the courage to decline to see one of the faculty."

"Very well. If she is roused to get up and come down stairs, she may come to her senses. But don't go yet. I have something to tell you, something that doesn't concern Miss Oldham but —er—myself. Do you remember the opera I told you about?"

Molly nodded.

"It's going into rehearsal Christmas week and will open in six weeks. Are you pleased?"

Molly was pleased, of course. She was always glad of other people's good luck.

"How would you like to go to the opening?" he asked.

"It would be wonderful, but—but I don't see how I can. I told you there were complications."

"Yes, I know," he answered, "but you're to forget complications that night and enjoy my first attempt to be amusing."

"I'll try," answered Molly, not realizing how her reply might sound to the author of the comic opera, who only smiled good-naturedly and said:

"The music will be pretty at any rate."

They sat talking about the opera for some time, in fact, until the tower clock clanged six.

"I never dreamed it was so late," apologized Molly, "and I have kept you all this time. I know you must be awfully busy. I hope you will forgive me."

"Didn't I just say that your time was quite as important as mine?" he said. "And when two very important people get together the moments are not wasted."

That night the Professor did call on Nance at Queen's, and the unhappy girl was obliged to get into her things as quickly as possible and go down. What he said to her Molly and Judy

never knew, but in an hour Nance returned to them in a normal, sensible state of mind, and not again did she turn her face to the wall and refuse to be comforted.

"There is no doubt in my mind that Professor Green is the nicest person in Wellington, that is, of the faculty," thought Molly as she settled under the reading lamp, and prepared to study her Lit. lesson.

CHAPTER XV.

A RECOVERY AND A VISIT.

Young Andy McLean was not destined to be gathered to his forefathers yet, however, and before Christmas he was able to sit up in bed and beg his mother fretfully to telephone to Exmoor and ask some of the fellows to come over.

"The doctor says you're not to see any of the boys yet, Andy," replied his mother firmly.

"If I can't see boys, is there anything I can see?" he demanded with extreme irritability.

Mrs. McLean smiled and a little later dispatched a note to Queen's Cottage. That afternoon Nance came shyly into Andy's room and sat down in a low chair beside the white iron hospital bed which had been substituted for the big old mahogany one.

"Your mother says you are lots better, Andy," she said.

Andy gave a happy, sheepish smile and wiggled two fingers weakly, which meant they were to shake hands

"Mother was afraid for the fellows to come," he said, "on account of my heart. I suppose she thinks a girl can't affect anybody's heart."

"I'm so quiet, you see," said Nance, "but I'll go if you think it's going to hurt you."

"You wouldn't like to see me cry, would you? I boohooed like a kid this morning because they wouldn't let me have broiled ham for breakfast. I smelt it cooking. It would be just like having to give up broiled ham for breakfast to have you go, Nance. Sit down again, will you, and don't leave me until I tell you. Since I've been sick I've learned to be a boss."

"I'm sorry I didn't let you boss me that night, Andy," remarked Nance meekly. "I ought never to have coasted down the hill. I've wanted to apologize ever since."

"Have you been blaming yourself?" he broke in. "It wasn't your fault at all. It all happened because I was angry and didn't look where I

was going. I have had a lot of time to think lately, and I've decided that there is nothing so stupid as getting mad. You always have to pay for it somehow. Look at me: a human wreck for indulging in a fit of rage. There's a fellow at Ex. who lost his temper in an argument over a baseball game and walked into a door and broke his nose."

Nance laughed.

"There are other ways of curing tempers besides broken bones," she said. "Just plain remorse is as good as a broken nose; at least I've found it so."

"Did you have the remorse, Nance?" asked Andy, wiggling the fingers of his good hand again.

"Yes, awfully, Andy," answered the young girl, slipping her hand into his. "I felt just like a murderer."

The nurse came in presently to say that the fifteen minutes allotted for the call was up. It had slipped by on the wings of the wind, but their friendship had been re-established on the

old happy basis. Andy was unusually polite to his mother and the nurse that day, and Nance went straight to the village and bought two big bunches of violets, one for Molly and one for Judy. In some way she must give expression to the rejoicing in her heart, and this was the only means she could think of.

Besides Andy McLean's recovery, several other nice things happened before Christmas. One morning Judy burst into her friend's room like a wild creature, waving a letter in each hand.

"They are coming," she cried. "They have each written to tell me so. Isn't it perfect? Isn't it glorious?"

No need to tell Molly and Nance who "they" were. These girls were fully aware that Judy treated her mother and father exactly like two sweethearts, giving each an equal share of her abundant affections; but the others were not so well informed about Judy's family relations. Otoyo Sen began to clap her hands and laugh joyously in sympathy.

"Is it two honorable young gentlemen who arriving come to see Mees Kean?"

"Now, Otoyo, how often have I told you not to say 'arriving come,'" exclaimed Molly. "I know it's a fascinating combination and difficult to forget in moments of excitement, but it's very bad English."

"Mees Kean, she is so happee," replied the Japanese girl, speaking slowly and carefully. "I cannot remembering when I see so much great joy."

"Wouldn't you be happy, too, if your honorable mamma and papa were coming to Wellington to visit you, you cunning little sparrow-bird?" asked Judy, seizing Otoyo's hands and dancing her wildly about the room.

"Oh, it is honorable mother and father! That is differently. It is not the same in Japan. Young Japanese girl might make great deal of noise over something new and very pretty,—you see? But it is not respectful to jump-up-so about parents arriving."

There was a great laugh at this. Otoyo was

an especial pet at Queen's with the older girls.

"She's like a continuous performance of 'The Mikado,'" remarked Edith Williams. "'Three little maids from school rolled into one,—the quaintest, most adorable little person."

"And when do these honorable parents arriving come?" asked Margaret Wakefield.

"To-morrow afternoon," answered Judy. "Where shall I get rooms? What shall I take them to see? Shall I give a tea and ask the girls to meet them? Don't you think a sleighing party would be fun? And a fudge party in the evening? Papa loves fudge. Do you think it would be a good idea to have dinner up here in Molly's and Nance's room, or let papa give a banquet at the Inn? Do suggest, everybody."

Judy was too excited to sit down. She was walking up and down the room, her cheeks blazing and her eyes as uncannily bright as two elfin lights on a dark night.

"Be calm, Judy," said Molly, taking her friend by the shoulders and pushing her into a chair. "You'll work yourself into a high fever with

your excitable ways. Now, sit down there and we'll talk it over quietly and arrange a program."

Judy sat down obediently.

"I suppose it does seem funny to all of you, but, you see, mamma and papa and I have been brought up together——"

"You mean you brought them up?" asked Edith.

"We brought each other up. They call me 'little sister', and until I went off to college, because papa insisted I must have some education, life was just one beautiful lark."

"What a jolly time you must have had!" observed Nance with a wistful smile which reminded the self-centred Judy at last that it was not exactly kind to pile it on too thickly about her delightful parents.

Not a little curiosity was felt by the Queen's girls to see Mr. and Mrs. Kean, whom Judy had described as paragons of beauty and wit, and they assembled at Wellington station in a body to meet the distinguished pair. Judy herself was in a quiver of happy excitement and when finally

the train pulled into the station, she rushed from one platform to another in her eagerness. Of course they had taken the chair car down, but she was too bewildered to remember that there was but one such coach on the Wellington train, and it was usually the rear car.

"I don't find them. Oh, mamma! Oh, papa! You couldn't have missed the train!" she cried, addressing the spirits of the air.

Just then a very tall, handsome man with eyes exactly like Judy's pinioned her arms from behind.

"Well, little sister, don't you know your own father?"

He was just as Judy had described him; and her word-picture also fitted Mrs. Kean, a dainty, pretty, little woman, with a doll-like face and flaxen hair, who would never have given the impression that she was in the habit of roughing it in engineering camps, sleeping out of doors, riding across sun-baked plains on Texas bronchos, and accompanying her husband wherever he went on his bridge and railroad-building trips.

"Judy hasn't had much home life," she said later to Molly. "We had to take our choice, little sister and I, between a home without papa or papa without a home, and we decided that he was ten thousand times more delightful than the most wonderful palace ever built."

Her extravagant speeches reminded Molly of Judy; but the mother was much gentler and quieter than her excitable daughter, and perhaps not so clever.

They dined at Queen's that night and made a tour of the entire house, except Judith Blount's room, all apartments having been previously spruced up for inspection. Otoyo had shown her respect for the occasion by hanging a Japanese lantern from the chandelier and loading a little table with "meat-sweets," which she offered to the guests when they paused in her room during their triumphal progress through the house.

Later Molly and Nance entertained at a fudge and stunt party and Mr. and Mrs. Kean were initiated into the secrets of life at Queen's.

They entered into the fun like two children,

and one of the stunts, a dialogue between the Williams sisters, amused Mr. Kean so much that he laughed loud and long, until his wife shook him by the shoulder and exclaimed:

"Hush, Bobbie. Remember, you're not on the plains, but in a girls' boarding school."

"Yes, Robert," said Judy, who frequently spoke to her parents by their first names, "remember that you are in a place where law and order must be maintained."

"You shouldn't give such laugh-provoking stunts, then," answered Mr. Kean, "but I'll try and remember to put on the soft pedal hereafter."

Then Molly, accompanying herself on Judy's guitar, sang:

"Big camp meetin' down the swamp,
Oh, my! Hallelujah!"

Mr. Kean suddenly joined in with a deep, booming bass. He had learned that song many years before in the south, he said, and had never forgotten it.

"He never forgets anything," said Judy proudly, laying her cheek against her father's. "And now, what will you sing, Bobbie, to amuse the ladies?"

Mr. Kean, without the least embarrassment, took the guitar, and, looking so amazingly like Judy that they might have been twins, sang:

"Young Jeremy Jilson Johnson Jenks
Was a lad of scarce nineteen——"

It was a delightful song and the chorus so catchy that after the second verse the entire fudge and stunt party joined in with:

" 'Oh, merry-me, merry-me,'
Sang young Jeremy,
'Merry-me, Lovely Lou——' "

Presently Mr. Kean, seizing his daughter around the waist, began dancing, and in a moment everybody was twirling to that lively tune, bumping against each other and tumbling on the divans in an effort to circle around the room. All

the time, Mrs. Kean, standing on a chair in the corner, was gently remonstrating and calling out:

"Now, Bobbie, you mustn't make so much noise. This isn't a mining camp."

Nobody heard her soft expostulations, and only the little lady herself heard the sharp rap on the door and noticed a piece of paper shoved under the crack. Rescuing it from under the feet of the dancers, and seeing that it was addressed to "Miss Kean," she opened and read it.

"Oh, how very mortifying," she exclaimed. "Now, Bobbie, I knew you would get these girls into some scrape. You are always so noisy. See here! Our own Judy being reprimanded! You must make your father explain to the President or Matron or whoever this Miss Blount is, that it was all his fault."

"What in the world are you talking about, Julia Kean?" demanded Judy, snatching the note from her mother and reading it rapidly. "Well, of all the unexampled impudence!" she cried when she had finished. "Will you be good enough to listen to this?

"'Miss Kean: You and your family are a little too noisy for the comfort of the other tenants in this house. Those of us who wish to study and rest cannot do so. This is not a dance hall nor a mining camp. Will you kindly arrange to entertain more quietly? The singing is especially obnoxious.

"'JUDITH BLOUNT.'"

Judy was in such a white heat of rage when she finished reading the note, that her mother was obliged to quiet her by smoothing her forehead and saying over and over:

"There, there, my darling, don't mind it so much. No doubt the young person was quite right."

Mr. Kean was intensely amused over the letter. He read it to himself twice; then laughed and slapped his knee, exclaiming:

"By Jove, Judy, my love, it takes a woman to write a note like that."

"A woman? A cat!" broke in Judy.

Mrs. Kean put her hand over her daughter's mouth and looked shocked.

"Oh, Judy, my dearest, you mustn't say such unladylike things," she cried.

"It's just because she wasn't invited," continued Judy. "I wouldn't let the girls ask her this time. She usually is invited and makes as much racket as any of us."

"It was rather mean to leave her out," observed Molly. "I suppose she's sore about it. But we didn't ask all the girls at Queen's. Sallie Marks and two freshmen were not invited, and if we had gone outside, we'd have invited Mary Stewart and Mabel Hinton."

"Still," said Mr. Kean, "there's nothing meaner than the 'left-out' feeling. It cuts deep. Suppose we smooth things over by asking her to our next party. Let me see. Will all of you give Mrs. Kean and me the pleasure of having you dine with us to-morrow evening at the Inn? Now, may I borrow some writing materials?" he added, after a chorus of acceptances had been raised.

Nance conducted him to her writing desk, which was always the acme of neatness, and well

stocked with stationery. Here is the letter that Mr. Kean wrote to Judith Blount, which Judy, looking over her father's shoulder, read aloud as it evolved:

" 'Dear Miss Blount:' (Blount, did you say her name was? Humph!) 'You were quite right to scold Mr. Kean and me for making so much noise. It was inconsiderate of us——' "

"But, Bobbie," protested Mrs. Kean, "it isn't fair to lay the blame on me and make me write the letter, too."

"Be quiet, my love," answered her husband.

" 'Will you not give us the pleasure of your company at dinner to-morrow evening at the Inn? We are anxious to show you what really quiet, law-abiding people we are, and Mr. Kean and I will be much disappointed if you do not allow us the opportunity to prove it to you.' "

Judy's father paused, his pen suspended, while he asked:

"Didn't I see bill posters at the station announcing a performance at the Opera House?"

"Yes," cried Judy. "They're giving 'The Silver King.'"

"'Dinner will be a little early,'" he wrote, "'because Mr. Kean is planning to take us all to the play afterwards. He will call for you in'—— what shall I call for you in?"

"The bus," promptly answered every girl in the room.

"'—the bus at six fifteen. Anticipating much pleasure in having you with us to-morrow, believe me, Most cordially yours,

JULIA S. KEAN.'"

"Now, Julia, my love, sit down and copy what I've written in your best handwriting, and we'll try to smooth down this fiery young person's ruffled feathers."

Mrs. Kean obediently copied the note. After all, it wasn't an unkind revenge, and Otoyo delivered it at Judith's door while the others chatted quietly and absorbed quantities of hot fudge and crackers.

Presently Otoyo stole softly back into the room.

"What did she say, little one?" asked Judy.

"She was very stilly," answered Otoyo shyly. "She spoke nothing whatever. I thought it more wisely to departing go."

The laugh that was raised at this lucid report restored good humor in the company.

A vehicle called for Mr. and Mrs. Kean at a quarter before ten to take them down into the village, and it was not long before every light was out in Queen's Cottage but one in a small single room in an upper story. Here, in front of the mirror over the dressing table, sat a black-eyed girl in a red silk dressing gown.

"Judith," she said fiercely to her image in the glass, "can't you remember that you are too poor to insult people any longer?"

Then she rolled up Mrs. Kean's note into a little ball and flung it across the room with such force that it hit the other wall and bounded back again to her feet, and she ground it under her heel. After this exhibition of impotent rage, she put out her light and flung herself into the bed, where she tossed about uneasily and exclaimed to herself:

"I won't be poor! I won't work. I hate this hideous little room and I loathe Queen's Cottage. I wish I had never been born."

Nevertheless, Judith Blount did humble herself next day to accept Mrs. Kean's invitation. At the dinner she was sullen and quiet, but she could not hide her enjoyment of the melodrama later.

The one taste which she had in common with her brother Richard was an affection for the theatre, no matter how crude the acting, nor how hackneyed the play.

But the insulting letter that she had sent to Judy Kean widened the breach between her and the Queen's girls, and no amount of effort on her part after that could bridge it over.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHRISTMAS EVE PLOTS.

Molly was not sorry to spend Christmas in Wellington this year. Numbers of invitations had come to her, but even Mary Stewart could not tempt her away from Queen's Cottage.

"Otoyo and I shan't be lonesome," she said. "We have a lot of work to do before the mid-year exams. and by the time you come back, Otoyo's adverbs are going to modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs. You'll see," she assured her friends cheerfully.

And when the last train-load pulled out of Wellington, and she trudged back along the deserted avenue, there was a strange gladness in her heart.

"I'm not homesick and I'm not lonesome," she said to herself. "I'm just happy. Except for Otoyo's lessons, I'm going to give myself a holi-

day. I'm going to read—poetry—lots of it, all I want, and to sit in the library and think. I'm going to take long walks alone. It will be like seeing the last of a dear friend, because Wellington will not be Wellington to me when I am installed at O'Reilly's."

Hardly half a dozen girls remained at college that Christmas, and Molly was glad that she knew them only by sight. She was almost glad that the doctor and Mrs. McLean had taken Andy south. She could not explain this unusual lack of sociability on her part, but she did not want to be asked anywhere. It was a pleasure to sit with Otoyo at one end of the long table in Queen's dining room, and talk about the good times they had been having. As for the future, Molly hung a thick veil between these quiet days and the days to come. Through it dimly she could see the bare little room at O'Reilly's, sometimes, but whenever this vision rose in her mind, she resolutely began to think of something else.

It would be time enough to look it in the face at the end of the semester, when she must break

the news to Nance and Judy and pack her things for the move.

Most of the girls had left on Saturday, and it seemed to Molly that Sunday was the quietest day of her whole life. Scarcely a dozen persons appeared at the Chapel for Vespers and the responses had to be spoken, the choir having departed for the holidays. Monday was Christmas Eve, and on that morning Mrs. Murphy, kind, good-natured soul that she was, carried Molly's breakfast to her room with a pile of letters from home. Molly read them while she drank her coffee, and saw plainly through their thinly veiled attempts at cheerfulness. It was evident that her family's fortunes were at a low ebb. Her mother was glad that Miss Walker had arranged for her to stay at college and she hoped Molly would be happy in her new quarters.

Molly finished her dressing.

"If I could only *do* something," she said to herself fiercely as she pinned on the blue tam, buttoned up her sweater and started out for a

walk. Otoyo, that model of industry, was deep in her lessons as Molly passed her door.

"I'll be back for lunch, Otoyo," she called as she hurried downstairs.

She had no sooner left the house than Queen's Cottage became the scene of the most surprising activities. Little Otoyo leaped to her feet as if she had unexpectedly sat on a hornet's nest and trotted downstairs as fast as her diminutive legs could carry her.

"Mrs. Murphee, I am readee," she called.

There was no telling what plot they were hatching, these two souls from nations as widely different as night from day. Boxes were pulled from mysterious closets. Mrs. Murphy and one of the maids emerged from the cellar with their arms full of greens and, stranger still, the dignified Professor of English Literature actually made his appearance at the kitchen door with a big market basket on one arm and—but what the Professor carried under the other arm had been carefully concealed with wrapping paper. These things he deposited with Mrs. Murphy.

"It's a pleasant sight, surely, to see you this Christmas Eve marnin', Professor," exclaimed the Irish woman. "You're as ruddy as a holly berry, sir, and no mistake."

"Well, Mrs. Murphy, I'm a Christmas Green, you know," answered the Professor, and Mrs. Murphy laughed like a child over the little joke.

"As for the young Japanese lady, she is that busy, sir. You would niver expect a haythen born to take on so about the birthday of our blessed Lord. But she's half a Catholic already, sir, and she's bought a holy candle to burn to-night."

"You're a good woman, Mrs. Murphy," said the Professor, standing beside the well-laden kitchen table, "and whatever she learns from you will do her good, too. She's a long way from home and I have no doubt she'll be very thankful for a little mothering, poor child."

"Indade, and she's as cheerful as the day is long, sir. And so is the other young lady, and she's used to a deal of rejicin' in her family, too. I can tell by the way she loves the entertainin'.

Her company niver goes away hungry and thirsty, sir. It's tea and cake always and more besides. 'Have you a little spare room in your oven so that I can bake some muffins for some friends this mornin', Mrs. Murphy?' she'll say of a Sunday. She's that hospitable and kind, sir. There's nobody like her in Queen's. I'd be sorry ever to lose her."

"Should you call her hair red, Mrs. Murphy?" asked the Professor irrelevantly.

"It's more red than anything else, sir, especially when the weather's damp."

"And what color should you say her eyes were, Mrs. Murphy?"

"An' you've not seen her eyes, surely, sir, if you can be askin' me that question. They're as blue—as blue, sir, like the skies in summer."

The Professor blinked his own brown eyes very thoughtfully.

"Well, good day, Mrs. Murphy, I must be off. Do you think you and Miss Sen together can manage things?"

"We can, surely," said Mrs. Murphy. "She's

as neat and quick a little body as I've seen this side the Atlantic."

"My sister gets here at noon. Good day," and the Professor was off, around the house, and across the campus, before Mrs. Murphy could take breath to continue her conversation.

In the meantime, Molly was hastening through the pine woods to a grove where she had once seen some holly bushes. In the pocket of her sweater were a pair of scissors and a penknife.

"We must have a little holiday decoration, Otoyo and I," she said to herself. "And it's lots nicer to gather it than buy it at the grocery store. I suppose my box from home will reach here to-night. I'll ask Mr. and Mrs. Murphy up to-morrow and give a party. There'll be turkey in it, of course, and plum cake and blackberry cordial—it won't be such a bad Christmas. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy are dears—I must do up their presents this afternoon. I hope Otoyo will like the little book. She'll be interested to know that Professor Green wrote it."

As she hurried along, breathing in the frosty

air, like Pilgrim she spied a figure a great way off coming toward her.

"Another left-over," she thought and went on her way, her steps keeping time to a poem she was repeating out loud:

" 'St. Agnes' Eve—ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl for all his feathers was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass
And silent was the flock in woolly fold——-' "

Molly had just repeated the last line over, too absorbed to notice the advancing figure through the pine trees, except sub-consciously to see that it was a girl.

"Ah, here's the holly," she exclaimed.

" 'Numb were the beadsman's fingers——' "

She knelt on the frozen ground and began cutting off branches with the penknife.

"I suppose you are rather surprised to see me, aren't you?"

Molly looked up. It was Judith Blount.

"Why, where did you come from, Judith?" she asked. "Didn't you go up to New York Friday, after all?"

"I was supposed to, but I didn't. I am staying down in the village at the Inn. I may go this afternoon. I haven't decided yet. To tell the truth, I am not very anxious to see my family. Papa—isn't at home and Richard and mamma are rather gloomy company. I think I'd rather spend Christmas almost anywhere than with them, this year."

"But your mother, Judith," exclaimed Molly, shocked at Judith's lack of feeling, "doesn't she need you now more than ever?"

"Why?" demanded Judith suspiciously. "What do you know of my affairs?"

"I happen to know a great deal," answered Molly, "since they have a good deal to do with my own affairs."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Now, Judith," went on Molly, "this is Christmas and we won't quarrel about our misfortunes. Whatever mine are, it's not your fault. I'm

gathering some holly to decorate for Otoyo and me. Won't you help me?"

"No, thanks," answered the other coldly. "I don't feel much like Christmas this year," she burst out, after a pause. "I'm seeing my last of college now, unless I choose to stay under certain conditions—and I won't—I won't," she repeated, stamping her foot fiercely on the frozen earth, which gave out a rhythmic sound under the blow. "Queen's is bad enough, but if I am to descend to a room over the post-office after this semester, I'd—I'd rather die!" she added furiously.

"We're in the same box," thought Molly. "I can appreciate how she feels, poor soul. I was just about as bad myself at first."

"Do you blame me?" went on the unhappy Judith. "Through no fault of mine I've had troubles heaped on me all winter—first one and then another. I have had to suffer for another person's sins; to be crushed into a nobody; taken from my rightful place and shoved off first into one miserable little hole and then another. I tell

you I don't think it's fair—it's unkind—it's cruel!"

Molly was not accustomed to hear people pity themselves. She had been brought up to regard it as an evidence of cowardice and low breeding.

"I've just about made up my mind," continued Judith, "to chuck the whole thing and go on the stage. I can sing and dance, and I believe I could get into almost any chorus. Richard, of course, wouldn't hear of my taking part in his new opera and he could arrange it just as easily as not, but he doesn't approve and neither does mamma. But it would be less humiliating than this." She pointed to Wellington.

"But Judith, it would be a great deal more humiliating," ejaculated Molly. "You would be fussed with and scolded, and you'd hear horrid language, and live in wretched hotels and boarding houses a great deal worse than the rooms over the post-office!"

It was very little Molly knew about chorus girl life, but that little she now turned to good account.

"You would have to travel a lot on smoky, uncomfortable trains and stay up late at night, whether you wanted to or not. You wouldn't be treated like a lady," she added innocently, "and you'd have to cover your face with grease and paint every night."

"I don't care," answered Judith. "Anything would be better than being banished from Wellington and living in a room next to that talkative little southern girl who does laundry work."

"Judith," exclaimed Molly, "I'm being banished from Wellington, too. I've taken a room at O'Reilly's. I've been through all the misery you're going through, and I know what you are suffering. I was almost at the point of going home once. But Judith, don't you see that it's rather cowardly to enjoy prosperity and the good things that come in time of peace, and then run away when the real fight begins? And it wouldn't do any good, either. It would only make other people suffer and we'd be much worse off ourselves. Don't you think Judith Blount, B. A.,

would be a more important person than Judith Blount, Chorus Girl?"

Judith began picking the leaves off a piece of holly. Almost everything she did was destructive.

"I suppose you're right," she said at last. "Mamma and Richard would have a fit and the chorus girl rôle wouldn't suit me, either. I'm too high-tempered and I can't stand criticism. But you're going to O'Reilly's? That puts a new face on it. I'll change to O'Reilly's, too."

Molly groaned inwardly. She would almost rather live next to a talking machine than a firebrand.

"They aren't such bad rooms," she said quietly. "When we get our things in, they'll be quite nice."

"And now, I'll hurry on," continued Judith, utterly absorbed in her own affairs. "I think I will take the train to New York this afternoon. I suppose it would be rather cowardly to leave mamma and Richard alone, this Christmas, especially. Good-by." She held out her hand.

"What are your plans? Are you going to do anything tonight to celebrate?"

"No," answered Molly, shaking Judith's hand with as much cordiality as she could muster. "Just go to bed."

"I thought perhaps you had formed some scheme of entertainment with my cousins."

"You mean the Greens? I didn't know they were here."

"I don't know that they are here, either. They have been careful to keep their plans from me."

Molly ignored this implication.

"I hope you'll enjoy your Christmas, Judith," she said. "Perhaps something will turn up."

"Something will have to turn up after next year," exclaimed Judith, "for I have made up my mind to one thing. I shall never work for a living."

And she strode off through the pine woods with her chin in the air, as if she were defying all the powers in heaven to make her change this resolution.

Molly shivered as she knelt to clip the holly.

She seemed to see a picture of a tiny little Judith standing in the middle of a vast, endless plain raging and shaking her fists at—what? The empty air. She sighed.

"I don't suppose I could ever make her understand that she'd be lots happier if she'd just let go and stop thinking that God has a grudge against her."

CHAPTER XVII.

A CHRISTMAS SURPRISE.

At six o'clock that evening a mouse's tail brushed Molly's door.

"Come in, little one," called Molly, recognizing Otoyo's tap. "My, how dressed up you are!" she cried as the little Japanese appeared in the doorway blushing and hesitating.

"You like it? This is real American young lady's toilet. It came from a greatly big store in New York."

Molly felt a real regret sometimes in correcting Otoyo's funny English. Was not the Brown family careful for many years to call bears "b'ars" just because the youngest brother said it when he was a little child?

"But why did you wear your pink cashmere this evening, dear?" she asked.

"Ah, but this is a holidee. In Japan we wear always best on holidee."

"Then I must dress up, too, I suppose," remarked Molly, sighing, "and I had thought to let myself off easy to-night, Otoyo. But I couldn't appear before Mrs. Murphy in this old garment and you so resplendent. What shall I wear chicken?" she asked, pinching Otoyo's cheek.

"The dress of sky blue."

"What, my last year's best?" laughed Molly. "My lady, you ask too much. I must preserve that for year after next best. But, seeing that you are doing honor to this happy occasion, Miss Sen, I'll wear it to please you."

She soon attired herself in the blue crêpe de chine over which she and Nance had labored so industriously the winter before.

The two girls strolled downstairs together and at the first landing Molly began sniffing the air.

" 'If my ole nose don't tell no lies,
It 'pears like I smells custard pies,' "

she remarked smiling.

"It's meence," said Otoyo.

Molly squeezed the little Japanese's plump waist.

"Yes, I know it's 'meence,' " she said, "but custard pies stand for mince and turkey and baked macaroni and all sorts of good things. We'll soon find out what Mrs. Murphy's been up to."

Pushing open the dining room door, she gave a start of surprise. The room was deserted and almost dark, and the long table was not even set for two.

"Why, we must have come down too soon, Otoyo. You little monkey, you led me to believe it was quite late."

Otoyo smiled and winked both eyes rapidly several times.

"I think Mrs. Murphee is a very week-ed ladee," she said slowly. "She run away from thees house and leave us all alone. We shall have no deener? Ah, that will be very sadlee."

They retreated from the dismal, deserted dining room into the hall. Immediately a door at

the far end was thrown open and a flood of light poured from Mrs. Markham's sitting room. Then Mrs. Murphy's ample figure blocked the doorway, and in her rich Irish brogue she called:

"You poor little lost lambs, is it for me you're lookin', then? Here I am and here's your supper waitin' for you."

Mrs. Markham was away for the holidays.

"All right, Mrs. Murphy," called Molly cheerfully. Taking Otoyo's hand, she led her down the hall. "Why, little one, I don't believe you are well," she exclaimed. "Your hands are cold and you are trembling."

The truth is, Miss Sen was almost hysterical with suppressed excitement.

"No, no, no," she replied. "I am feeling quite, quitely well."

Grasping Molly's hand more firmly, she began running as if the strain were too great to be endured longer.

All this time Molly had not the faintest suspicion of the surprises awaiting her in Mrs. Markham's sitting room. Imagine her amaze-

ment when she found herself confronting Miss Grace Green, her two brothers and Lawrence Upton in that cozy apartment! In the center was a round table set for six, and in the center of the round table was the most adorable miniature Christmas tree decorated with tiny ornaments and little candles, their diminutive points of light blinking cheerfully. Four tall silver candlesticks with red shades flanked the Christmas tree at each side; a wood fire crackled in the open fireplace and everywhere were bunches and garlands of holly.

Molly was quite speechless at first and she came very near crying. But she choked back the lump which would rise in her throat and smiled bravely at the company.

"I hope you are pleased with the surprise, dear," said Miss Grace Green, kissing her. "It seemed to Edwin and me that six homeless people should unite in making a Christmas for themselves. Lawrence is like you. He lives too far away for Christmas at home, and I am at the mercies of a boarding house. So, Mrs. Mur-

phy has agreed to be a mother to all of us this Christmas and cheer us up."

"Shure, and I'd like to be the mother of such a foine family," said Mrs. Murphy. "Me old man wouldn't mind the responsibility, either, I'm thinkin'."

They all laughed and Molly found herself shaking hands with Professor Green and Dodo and Lawrence Upton; kissing Miss Green again; rapturously admiring the exquisite little tree and rushing from one holly decoration to another, to the joy of Otoyo, who had arranged the greens with her own hands.

Surely such a happy Christmas party had never taken place before at old brown Queen's. Mrs. Murphy herself waited on the table and joined in the conversation whenever she chose, and once Mr. Murphy, baggage master at Wellington station, popped his head in at the door and smiling broadly, remarked:

"Shure, 'tis a happy party ye're after makin' the night; brothers and sisters; swatehearts and frinds—all gathered togither around the same

board. It'll be a merry evenin' for ye, young ladies and gintlemin, and it's wishin' ye well I am with all me heart."

"Thank you, Mr. Murphy," said the Professor, "and we be wishin' the same to you and many Christmasses to follow."

"Which one of us is your swateheart, Miss Sen?" asked Lawrence Upton mischievously.

"I like better the 'meat-sweet' than the sweetheart," answered Miss Sen demurely. There was no doubt, however, that she knew the meaning of the word "sweetheart."

How they all laughed at this and teased Lawrence.

"Just be *bonbon* and you'll be a 'meat-sweet,' Larry," said the Professor, who appeared this evening to have laid aside all official dignity and become as youthful as his brother Dodo.

After dinner the table was cleared, the fire built up, and the company gathered around the hearth. They roasted chestnuts and told ghost stories. Otoyo in the quaintest English told a blood-curdling Japanese story which interested

Professor Green so deeply that he took out a little book and jotted down notes, and questioned her regarding names and places.

Molly knew a true story of a haunted house in Kentucky, fallen into ruins because no one had dared live in it for years.

Then Mrs. Murphy brought in the lamps and Professor Green drew up at the table and read aloud Dickens's "Christmas Carol." Molly's mother had read to her children the immortal story of "Tiny Tim" ever since they could remember on Christmas day, and it gave Molly much secret pleasure to know that these dear kind friends had kept up the same practice. After that they fetched down Judy's guitar and, with Molly accompanying, they sang some of the good old songs that people think they have forgotten until they hear the thrum of the guitar and someone starts the singing.

At last the tower clock boomed midnight, and as the echo of the final stroke vibrated in the room, the door opened and Santa Claus stood on the threshold.

"Shure, an' I'm just on the nick of time," he said with a good Irish accent, as he unstrapped his pack and proceeded to distribute packages done up in white tissue paper tied with red ribbons.

There were presents for everyone with no names attached, but Molly suspected Professor Green of being the giver of the pretty things. Hers was a volume of Rossetti's poems bound in dark blue leather. There was a pretty volume of Tennyson's poems for Otoyo; and funny gifts for everybody, with delightful jingles attached which the Professor read very gravely. Otoyo almost had hysterics over her toy, which was simply a small, imitation book shelf on which was a row of the works of Emerson and Carlyle, filled with "meat-sweets."

Only one thing happened to mar that evening's pleasure, and this was the fault of the little Japanese herself, to her undying mortification and sorrow. When the party was at its very height and they had joined hands and were circling around Santa Claus, who was singing "The

Wearing of the Green," Otoyo unexpectedly broke from the circle and with a funny, squeaky little scream pointed wildly at the window.

"Why, child, what frightened you?" asked Miss Grace Green, taking the girl's hand and looking into her white, scared face.

But Otoyo refused to explain and would only say over and over:

"I ask pardon. I feel so sorrowfully to make this beeg disturbance. Will you forgive Otoyo?"

"Of course we forgive you, dear. And won't you tell us what you saw?"

"No, no, no. It was notheeng."

"We ought to be going, at any rate," said the Professor. "Miss Sen isn't accustomed to celebrations like this when old people turn into children and children turn into infants."

"Am I an infant?" asked Molly, "or a child?"

"I am afraid you still belong to the infant class, Miss Brown," replied the Professor regretfully.

They attributed Otoyo's fright to nervousness

caused from over-excitement, and a few minutes later the party broke up.

It was one o'clock when the two girls finally climbed upstairs to the lonely silent third floor. Molly escorted Otoyo to her little room and turned on the light.

"Now, little one," she said, putting her hands on the Japanese girl's shoulders and searching her face, "what was it you saw at the window?"

Otoyo closed the door carefully and, tipping back to Molly's side, whispered:

"The greatly beeg black eyes of Mees Blount look in from the window outside. She was very angree. Oh, so angree! She look like an eevil spirit."

"Then she didn't go to New York, after all! But how silly not to have joined us. What a jealous, strange girl she is!"

Molly could not know, however, with what care and secrecy the Greens had guarded their Christmas plans from Judith, who had caught a glimpse of the Professor and his sister at the general store that afternoon. It was revealed to her

that her cousins would much rather not spend Christmas with her, and with a sullen, stubborn determination she changed her mind about going to New York. There was a good deal of the savage in her untamed nature, and that night, wandering unhappily about the college grounds and hearing sounds of laughter and singing from Queen's, she pressed her face against the window and the gay picture she saw inflamed her mind with rage and bitterness. The poor girl did resemble an evil spirit at that moment. There was hatred in her heart for every merrymaker in the room, and if she had had a dynamite bomb she would have thrown it into the midst of the company without a moment's hesitation.

When Molly went to her own room after her talk with Otoyo, she found a note on her dressing table which did not worry her in the least considering she was quite innocent of the charge.

"You told me a falsehood this morning with all your preaching. I'd rather live over the post-office next to an incessant talker who does laundry work than stay in the same house with a person as deceitful and untruthful as you. J. B."

"I'm sorry for the poor soul," thought Molly, as she contemplated her own happy image in the glass. "She is like a traveller who deliberately takes the hardest road and chooses all the most disagreeable places to walk in. If she would just turn around and go the other way she would find it so much more agreeable for herself and all concerned."

Nevertheless, Molly felt a secret relief that Judith had chosen to stay over the post-office.

As for the incorrigible Judith, she did leave for New York early next morning and spent the rest of the holidays with her mother and brother.

Molly saw a great deal of the Greens for the next few days. They had tea together and long walks, and once the Professor read aloud to his sister and the little girl from Kentucky in the privacy of his own study. Miss Green and her two brothers left Wellington on New Year's Eve to visit some cousins in the next county, and still Molly was not lonely, for Lawrence Upton put in a great deal of time teaching her to skate and showing Otoyo and her the country around Wellington.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BREAKING THE NEWS.

Mrs. Markham had received due notice that Molly Brown of Kentucky would be obliged to give up her half of the big room on the third floor at Queen's. The matron was very sorry. Miss Blount also was moving to other quarters, she said; but she was too accustomed to the transitory tenants of Queen's to feel any real grief over sudden departures.

"It only remains to break the news to the others," thought Molly, but she mercifully determined to wait until after the mid-year examinations. She was very modest regarding her popularity, but she was pretty sure that Judy's highly emotional temperament might work itself into a fever from such a shock. Remembering her last year's experience at mid-years, Molly

guarded her secret carefully until after the great crisis.

At last, however, the fateful moment came. All the Queen's circle was gathered in that center of hospitality in which Molly had spent so many happy months. The walls never looked so serenely blue as on that bright Sunday morning in January, nor the Japanese scroll more alluring and ornamental. A ray of sunlight filtering through the white dimity curtains cast a checkered shadow on the antique rug. Even the imperfections of the old room were dear to Molly's heart now that she must leave them forever; the spot in the ceiling where the roof had leaked; the worn place in the carpet where they had sat around the register, and the mischievous chair with the "game leg" which precipitated people to the floor unexpectedly.

Everybody was in a good humor.

"There are no shipwrecks on the strand this year," Margaret Wakefield was saying. "Everybody's safe in harbor, glory be."

"Even me," put in Jessie meekly. "I never

thought I'd pull through in that awful chemistry exam., and I was morally certain I'd flunk in math., too. I'm so afraid of Miss Bowles that my hair stands on end whenever she speaks to me."

"She is rather formidable," said Edith Williams. "Why is it that Higher Mathematics seems to freeze a body's soul and turn one into an early Puritan?"

"It simply trains the mind to be exact," said Margaret, who always defended the study of mathematics in these discussions. "And exactness means sticking to facts, and that's an excellent quality in a woman."

"Meaning to say," broke in Katherine Williams, "that all un-mathematical minds are untruthful——"

"Nothing of the sort," cried Margaret hotly. "I never made any such statement. Did I, girls? I said——"

There was a bumping, tumbling noise in the hall. Judy, the ever-curious, opened the door.

"The trunks are here, Miss," called Mr. Mur-

phy, "and sorry we are to lose you, the old woman and I."

"Thank you, Mr. Murphy," answered Molly.

"Well, for the love of Mike," cried Judy, turning around and facing Molly. "What are you talking about?"

"I'm not talking about anything," answered Molly, trying to keep her voice steady.

"Did you flunk in any of the exams., Molly Brown?" asked Edith in a whisper.

"No," whispered Molly in reply. It was going to be even worse than she had pictured to herself. "No," she repeated. A pulse throbbed in her throat and made her voice sound all tremolo like a beginner's in singing. "I waited to tell you until after mid-years. I'm not going very far away —only to O'Reilly's."

Nance, who had been sitting on the floor with her head against Molly's knee, began softly to weep. It was certainly one of the most desolating experiences of Molly's life.

"O'Reilly's?" they cried in one loud protesting shriek.

"Yes, you see, we—we've lost some money and I have to move," began Molly apologetically. "We can be friends just the same, only I won't see quite as much of you—it—it will be harder on me than on you——"

It would have been gratifying if it had not been so sad, this circle of tear-stained faces and every tear shed on her account."

"We simply can't do without you, Molly," cried pretty, affectionate Jessie Lynch. "You belong to the 'body corporate' of Queen's, as Margaret calls it, to such an extent that if you leave us, we'll—well, we'll just fall to pieces, that's all."

It remained for Judy Kean, however, that creature of impulse and emotion, to prove the depths of her affection. When she rushed blindly from the room, her friends had judged that she wished to be alone. Molly had once been a witness to the awful struggle of Judy in tears and she knew that weeping was not a surface emotion with her.

For some time, Molly went on quietly explaining and talking, answering their questions and

assuring them that there would be many meetings at O'Reilly's of Queen's girls.

"I expect you'll have to move into Judith Blount's singleton, Nance," she continued, patting her friend's cheek. "That is, unless you can arrange to get someone to share this one with you."

"Don't, don't," sobbed Nance. "I can't bear it."

Again there was a noise outside of trunks being carried upstairs and dumped down in the hall.

"There go poor Judith's trunks," observed Molly. "It will be harder on her than on me because she takes it so hard. She's——"

Molly broke off and opened the door. Judy's voice was heard outside giving directions.

"Just pull them inside for me, will you, Mr. Murphy? I know they fill up the room, but I like to pack all at once. Will you see about the room for me at Mrs. O'Reilly's as you go down to the station? I'll notify the registrar and Mrs. Markham. And Mr. Murphy, get a room next

to Miss Brown's, if possible. I don't care whether it's little or big."

Nance pushed Molly aside and rushed into the hall.

"Why hadn't I thought of that?" she cried. "Mr. Murphy, I want a room at O'Reilly's. Will you engage one for me as near Miss Brown's as you can, and before you go bring up my trunks, please?"

"Now, may the saints defind us," cried the distracted Mr. Murphy. "It looks as if the whole of Queen's was movin' down to the village. You're a foine lot of young ladies, Miss, and loyalty ain't so usual a trait in a woman, either."

"But Nance, but Judy!" protested Molly. "I can't—you mustn't——"

"Don't say another word," put in Judy as if she were scolding a bad child. "Nance and I would rather live at O'Reilly's with you than at Queen's without you, that's all. We mean no reflection on the others, but I suppose you all understand. Edith and Katherine wouldn't be sepa-

rated, and Jessie and Margaret wouldn't. Well, it's the same with us."

"You'll be sorry," cried Molly. "Oh, Judy, I know you'll regret it the very first day. It will be very different from Queen's. We'll have to get our own breakfasts, and take meals at the place next door, and the rooms are plain with ugly wall paper, and there isn't any white woodwork, and it's a big empty old place. It used to be a small hotel, you know, and Mrs. O'Reilly is trying to sell it. The only recommendation it has, is that it's very cheap."

"Why didn't you go over to the post-office, Molly?" asked Margaret.

"They are nicer rooms," admitted Molly, "but——"

"Judith Blount is going there," put in Judy.

"That wasn't the only reason. I really had arranged about O'Reilly's before I knew Judith Blount was going to leave here."

The girls looked puzzled.

"I know," said Edith. "There's a young per-

son with a soft cooing voice at the post-office who talks a mile a minute."

"She's a very nice girl," broke in Molly, "and works so hard. I really like her ever so much. She's very clever, but I have a sort of bewildered feeling when I am with her."

"I know," said Edith. "It's like standing on the banks of a rushing river. There's no way to stop it and there's no way to get across. You might as well retreat to O'Reilly's in good order."

"O'Reilly's it is," cried Judy with the gallant air of one about to go forth in search of adventure.

It was in vain that Molly protested. Her friends had made up their minds and nothing could swerve them. By good luck, the checks in payment for board and lodging at Queen's for the new quarter had not arrived, and the two girls were free to move if they chose.

Together the three friends, more closely united than ever by the sacrifice of two of them, walked down into the village that afternoon to have a look at O'Reilly's, and they were obliged to con-

fess that they were not impressed with its possibilities as a home. But it was a dark, cold day —when even cheerful, pretty rooms would not have looked their best.

"These two back rooms will be rather nice when the spring comes," observed Nance, with a forced gaiety. "They look over the garden, you see. Perhaps Mrs. O'Reilly will let us plant some seeds in March."

"It won't be nice," Molly cried. "It will be miserable. I've known it all along myself, but I wouldn't admit it until now. Girls, I implore you to stay at Queen's. You never will be happy here, and I shall be twice as unhappy."

"Now, don't say another word, Molly Brown," said Judy. "We're going to follow you if it's to the Inferno."

"Think how you'll miss the others."

"Think how we'd miss you."

"We'd better go back and pack our things, then," sighed Molly, feeling very much like a culprit who had drawn her friends into mischief.

That night they packed their belongings, and

not once by the blink of an eyelash did Judy or Nance show what they felt about leaving Queen's forever. At last with walls cleared of pictures, curtains neatly folded, books piled into boxes and rugs rolled up, the three girls went to bed, worn out with the day's labors and emotions.

In the night, Nance, shivering, crawled into Molly's bed and brought all her covering with her. Under a double layer of comforts they snuggled while the thermometer went down, down until it reached ten degrees below zero.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW O'REILLY'S BECAME QUEEN'S.

Molly often looked back on that famous bitter Monday as the most exciting day of her entire life. Surprises began in the morning when they learned for a fact that it was ten degrees below zero. Barometers in a house always make the weather seem ten times worse. In the night the water pipes had burst and flooded the kitchen floor, which by morning was covered with a layer of ice. On this, the unfortunate Mrs. Murphy, entering unawares, slipped and sprained her ankle. The gas was frozen, and neither the gas nor the coal range could be used that eventful morning. The girls prepared their own breakfasts on chafing dishes, and wrapped in blankets they shivered over the registers, up which rose a thin stream of heat that made but a feeble impression on the freezing atmosphere.

"We do look something like a mass meeting of Siberian exiles," observed Judy grimly, looking about her in Chapel a little later.

Miss Walker herself wore a long fur coat and a pair of arctic shoes and in the assembled company of students there appeared every variety of winter covering known to the civilized world, apparently: ulsters, golf capes, fur coats, sweaters, steamer rugs and shawls.

Molly was numb with cold; fur coats were the only garments warm enough that day, and a blue sweater under a gray cloth jacket was as nothing against the frigid atmosphere.

"Bed's the only comfortable place to be in," she whispered to Judy, "and here we've got classes till twelve thirty and moving in the afternoon! The trunks are going this morning. Oh, heavens, how I do dread it!"

"At least O'Reilly's couldn't be any colder than Queen's is at present," replied Judy, "and there's a grate in the room I am to have. We'll have a big coal fire and cheer things up considerably."

Everything was done on the run that day.

Groups of girls could be seen tearing from one building to another. They dashed through corridors like wild ponies and rushed up and down stairs as if the foul fiends were chasing them.

The weather was like a famous invalid rapidly sinking. They frequently took his temperature and cried to one another:

"It's gone down two degrees."

"The bulletin says it will be fifteen by night."

"Oh," groaned Molly, thinking of her friends at that dismal O'Reilly's.

Having half an hour to spare between classes, she went to the library where she met Nance.

"There are some letters for you, Molly. They came by the late mail. I saw them in the hall," Nance informed her.

But Molly was not deeply interested in letters that morning.

"Never mind mail," she said. "I can only think of two things. How cold I am this minute, and how uncomfortable you and Judy are going to be for my sake."

"Don't think about it, Molly, dear," said Nance.

"We'll soon get adjusted at O'Reilly's with you, and we never would at Queen's without you."

Molly could not find her mail when she returned to Queen's for lunch, which had been prepared with much difficulty on several chafing dishes and a small charcoal brazier by Mrs. Markham and the maid. Nobody seemed to know anything about letters in the upset and half-frozen household, until it was finally discovered that Mr. Murphy had taken Molly's mail down to O'Reilly's when he had moved the trunks.

Having disposed of indifferently warmed canned soup and creamed boned chicken that was chilled to its heart, the three friends went down to the village. They looked at the rooms; they stood gazing pensively at their trunks; it seemed too cold to make the physical effort to unpack their clothes. Again the fugitive letters had escaped Molly. Mr. Murphy, finding she was not to come down until afternoon had kept them in his pocket and was at that moment at the station awaiting the three fifteen train.

"It's too cold to follow him," said Molly, never

dreaming that Mr. Murphy was carrying about with him a letter which was to change the whole tenor of her life. "I'm so homesick," she exclaimed, "let's go back to Queen's for awhile."

And back they hastened. Somehow they didn't know what to do with themselves in their new quarters. It seemed unnatural to sit down and chat in those strange rooms.

As they neared the avenue they noticed groups of girls ahead of them, all running. The three friends began to run, too, beating their hands together to stir up the circulation. A bell was ringing violently. Its clang in the frosty air sounded harsh and unnatural.

"That's the fire bell," cried Judy.

They dashed into the avenue. The campus was alive with students all running in the same direction.

"It's Queen's," shrieked Nance. "Queen's is burning!"

Smoke was pouring from every window in the old brown house. The lawn in front was filled with a jumbled mass of furniture and clothes.

Margaret and Jessie appeared on the porch dragging a great bundle of their belongings tied up in a bedspread. Otoyo rushed from the house, her arms filled with things. Mrs. Murphy, seated in a big chair on the campus, was rocking back and forth and moaning:

"Queen's is gone. Nothing can save her. The pipes is froze."

Out of the front door Edith Williams now emerged, quite calmly, with an armload of books.

"Edith," cried Katherine, who had run at full speed all the way from the Quadrangle, "why didn't you bring our clothes?"

For an answer her sister pointed at a pile of things on the ground.

"I made two trips," she replied.

All this the girls heard as in a dream as they stood in a shivering row on the campus. Old brown Queen's was about to be reduced to ashes and cinders! No need to summon the fire brigade or call in the volunteer fire department from the village, although this organization presently came dashing up with a small engine. Flames

were already licking their way hungrily along the lower story of the house, and the slight stream of water from the engine hose only seemed to rouse them to greater fury.

"I'm only thankful it didn't happen at night," they heard Miss Walker cry as she pushed her way through the throng of girls. "And you, my dear child," she continued, laying a hand on Molly's shoulder, "did you save your things?"

Molly started from her lethargy. She was so cold and unhappy, she had forgotten all about her belongings.

"Oh, yes, Miss Walker," she answered. "You see, we moved this morning. Wasn't it fortunate?"

"We?" repeated Miss Walker.

"Yes. My two friends, Miss Oldham and Miss Kean, moved, too. They—well, they wouldn't stay at Queen's without me."

"Is it possible?" said the President. "And their trunks had gone down to the village? Dear, dear, what a remarkably providential thing. And what devoted friends you seem to make, Miss

Brown," she added, patting Molly's hand and then turning away to speak to Professor Green, who had hurried up.

"Is everybody safe?" he asked breathlessly.

"Yes, yes, Professor, everybody's safe and everything has been done that could be done. I am afraid some of the girls have lost a good many things, but you will be glad to know that three of them had only this morning sent their trunks to rooms in the village—Miss Brown and her two friends."

"Miss Brown moving to the village?"

Molly looked up and caught the Professor's glance turned searchingly on her.

"I am going to live at O'Reilly's," she said.

"And you are safe and your things are safe?" he asked her, frowning so sternly that she felt she must have displeased him somehow. "I'm glad, very glad," he added, turning abruptly away. "Is there nothing I can do, Miss Walker?"

For answer she pointed to the volunteers from the village who had leaped away from the house.

The crowd swerved back. There was a crackling sound, a crash; a great wave of heat swept across the campus and the front wall of Queen's fell in. They had one fleeting view of the familiar rooms, and then a cloud of ashes and smoke choked the picture. It was not long before only the rear wall of old brown Queen's was left standing.

"Dust to dust and ashes to ashes," said Edith Williams, solemnly.

It did seem very much like a funeral to the crowd of Queen's girls who stood in a shivering, loyal row to the end.

"So much for Queen's," said Margaret Wakefield. "She's dead and now what's to be done?"

It was decided that the girls should go to O'Reilly's for the time being, all other available quarters being about filled. If they preferred the post-office they could stay there; but they preferred O'Reilly's.

And thither, also, went Mrs. Markham and the Murphys and the maids from Queen's. In a few short hours, it would seem, Queen's had been changed to O'Reilly's, or O'Reilly's to Queen's.

It turned out, too, that Mrs. O'Reilly was nearly related to Mr. Murphy, and all things, therefore, worked together in harmony.

O'Reilly's seemed a place of warmth and comfort to the half-frozen girls who clustered around the big fire in Judy's room at five o'clock that afternoon, scalding their tongues with hot tea and coffee while they discussed their plans for the future.

"Mrs. Markham told *me*," announced Margaret, a recognized authority on all subjects, political, domestic, financial and literary, "that it would probably be arranged to make O'Reilly's into a college house for the rest of the winter. She said they might even do over the rooms. It would be a smaller household than Queen's, of course—only eight or nine—but it would be rather cosy and—there would be no breaking up of old ties. If this isn't approved," she continued, exactly as if she were addressing a class meeting, "we shall have to scatter. There's another apartment in the Quadrangle and there are a few singletons left in some of the campus houses. Now,

girls,"—her voice took on an oratorical ring—"of course, I know that we are nearly fifteen minutes' walk by the short cut from the college and that we may not be *in* things as much; but the best part of college we have here at O'Reilly's. And that's ourselves. I move that we change O'Reilly's into Queen's and make the best of it for the rest of the winter."

"Hurrah! I second the motion," cried Katherine Williams.

"All those in favor of this motion will please say 'aye'," said the President.

"Aye," burst from the throats of the eight friends, Otoyo's shrill high note sounding with the others.

"Hurrah for our President," cried Molly, dancing around the room in an excess of happiness.

"Unitus et concordia," said Edith gravely.

"It's really Molly that's transformed O'Reilly's into Queen's," continued Margaret, who had a generous, big way of saying things when she chose. "It's Molly who has kept us all together.

With Molly and Nance and Judy gone, Queen's would have been a different place."

"It would! It would!" they cried. "Three cheers for Molly Brown!"

" 'Here's to Molly Brown, drink her down!
Here's to dear old Queen's, drink her down.' "

Through the din of singing and cheering, there came a loud knocking at the door and a voice cried:

"Open in the name of the law!"

Then the door was thrust open and Sallie Marks marched in flourishing a hot-water bag in one hand and a thermos bottle in the other.

"Well," she exclaimed, "you're the most cheerful lot of refugees I ever saw. I came down expecting to find eight frozen corpses stretched on the shining strand, and here you are singing hilarious songs and yelling like a lot of Comanche Indians."

"What are you bringing us, Sallie?" demanded Judy.

"I'm bringing you myself," said Sallie. "I've arranged to come down here. They shelved me with a lot of freshies at Martin's and I said I'd rather be at O'Reilly's with the Old Guard. So Mr. Murphy brought me down with two sheetloads of my things and some beds from the hospital, and here I am."

"Hurrah!" they cried again, joining hands and dancing in a circle around Sallie.

" 'Here's to good old Sallie, drink her down,
Drink her down, drink her down, drink her down!' "

After this wild outburst of joy over the return of another wanderer to the fold, Sallie began to remove her outer wrappings.

"I feel like an Egyptian mummy," she remarked as she skinned off two long coats and unwound several scarfs.

"You look like a pouter pigeon," said Judy, "what have you got stuffed in there?"

"Mail," said Sallie, unbuttoning another

jacket, "mail for Queen's. Mr. Murphy gave it to me when he came to get my things. And, by the way," she added, "I saved my rocking chair and sat in it as I drove down to the village. Wasn't it beautiful? I suppose I'll be lampooned now as 'Sallie, the emigrant.' But it was too cold to care much. I was only thankful I had taken the precaution to fill the hot-water bag and the thermos bottle before I started on the drive."

CHAPTER XX.

THE TURN OF THE WHEEL.

Sallie Marks had, indeed, received a royal welcome from her friends. They were as glad to see her as if she had just returned from a long voyage. Now they poked the fire and made fresh tea and petted and caressed her until her pale, near-sighted eyes were quite watery and she was obliged to wipe the moisture from her glasses.

"We'll make out the winter here, girls," she assured them. "It may take a week to get the house in order, but we can put up with a little discomfort to have O'Reilly's to ourselves. If they would only strip off this bilious paper and lay a few mattings! The plumbing is better than it was at Queen's, and the heating arrangements, too."

The room was really very comfortable what

with the fire in the grate and the heat pouring up the register.

"It was a defective flue that made old Queen's go under," observed Katherine sadly, as if she were speaking of a dear friend who had lately passed into another life. "I am afraid her heating apparatus was a little second class."

"Speak no evil of the dead," admonished her sister Edith.

"Requiescat in pace," said Sallie in a solemn voice.

"La reine est morte; vive la reine," said Margaret.

"After all, we are really 'Queen's,' " said Judy, "so let's be as happy as we can. Where are those letters, Sallie?"

Sallie unbuttoned the last layer of sweater and drew out a pile of mail which she distributed, calling the name of each girl.

"Molly Brown," she called, handing Molly a letter from Kentucky.

"Miss Sen, a letter from the Land of the Rising Sun. I hope it will rise warmer there than it

set here this evening. Miss Jessie Lynch, a letter addressed in the handwriting of a male. Ahem! Miss Lynch, another letter in the same handwriting of presumably the same male."

Much laughter among those not already absorbed in letters.

"Miss Margaret Wakefield, an official document from the capital of these United States of America. Miss Julia S. Kean, a parental epistle which no doubt contains other things. Miss Molly Brown, who appears to be secretly purchasing a farm."

Sallie handed Molly a long envelope, while the others snatched their letters and turned away. Only Nance had received no mail that day; yet, more than any girl there, she enjoyed corresponding and sent off weekly voluminous letters to her father, her only correspondent except Andy McLean, who was not yet considered strong enough to write letters.

It was with something very near to envy that she watched the faces of her friends as they

waded through long family letters with an occasional laugh or comment:

"It's been ten below at home."

"Father forgot to put in my check. He's getting very thoughtless."

"My wandering parents are going to Florida. They can't stand the cold in New York."

"Here's a state of things," exclaimed Edith, "another book bill for books that were burned. Isn't that the limit?"

"Yes, and you'll borrow from me again," said Katherine. "And I shall refuse to lend you another cent. You are getting entirely too crazy about buying books."

Nobody took any notice of this sisterly dialogue which went on continuously and never had any real meaning, because in the end Katherine always paid her sister's debts.

Nance's gaze shifted to Molly, who might have been turned into a graven image, so still was she sitting. She had not opened the letter from home, but the long envelope from the real estate company lay at her feet. In one hand she held

a typewritten letter and in the other a long blue slip of paper which, beyond a doubt, was a check. Picking up the envelope, Molly gave a covert glance around the absorbed circle and slipped the check inside. Then she noticed Nance gazing at her curiously. She smiled, and then began to laugh so joyously that everybody stopped reading and regarded her almost anxiously. There was a peculiar ring of excitement in her voice.

"Molly, hasn't something awfully nice happened to you?" asked Nance.

"Why, yes," she answered, "to tell the truth, there has."

"What is it? What is it?" cried the chorus of voices.

Molly hesitated and blushed, and laughed again.

"I don't think you would believe it if I were to tell you," she said. "It's too absurd. I can hardly believe it myself, even after reading the letter and seeing the—the——"

"The what, Molly?" demanded Judy, beside herself with curiosity.

Molly laughed again.

"I'm so happy," she cried. "It's made me warm all over. The temperature has risen ten degrees."

"Molly Brown, will you explain yourself? Can't you see we are palpitating to know what it is?" cried Judy.

"I've won a prize," exclaimed Molly. "I've won a prize. Can't you see what it means to me? I needed the money and it came. A perfect windfall. Oh, isn't this world a delightful place? I don't mind the cold weather and O'Reilly's. I'm so happy. I prayed for rain and carried my umbrella. Oh, I'm so happy, happy, happy!"

"Has the child gone daffy?" said Sallie Marks, while Judy seized the envelope and drew out a check for two hundred dollars made out in the name of "Mary C. W. Brown." Then she opened the letter and read aloud:

" 'Dear Madam:

It gives us much pleasure to inform you that among several hundred contestants you have won the prize of $200, offered by this company for the

best advertisement in prose or verse for one of our mountain chalets. Your poem will occupy the first page in an elaborate booklet now under way and we hope will attract many customers. We offer you our congratulations and good wishes for other literary successes and enclose the check herewith.

Very cordially yours, etc., etc.' "

"Am I sleeping or waking?" cried Molly. "This, at the end of this awful day! Isn't it wonderful?"

The reunited friends made so much noise over this triumph of their favorite that Mrs. Markham, superintending the setting up of beds and arranging of rooms with Mrs. O'Reilly, smilingly observed:

"Dear me, they don't seem to take their misfortune much to heart, do they?"

"They're that glad to get in out of the cold, ma'am, and warm themselves with some tea. It's thawed them out, I expect, the poor young things. They was half froze when they come an hour ago."

"But where's the poem, Molly," cried Judy,

when the racket had subsided. "We must see the poem."

"It's locked in my trunk."

"Get it out, get it out," they ordered, and she had no peace until she unlocked the trunk and, rummaging in her portfolio, found the original manuscript of "The Chalet of the West Wind."

"I can't see why it won the prize," she said. "I hadn't even the shadow of a hope when I sent it. It's not a bit like an ad."

"It was certainly what they wanted," said Sallie. "They didn't have to give you the prize, seeing that they had several hundred to choose from. But read it, because I'm in a fever of curiosity to hear it."

In the meantime, Judy had lit the gas, and taking Molly by the shoulders, pushed her into a chair under the light.

"I'm most awfully embarrassed," announced Molly, "but here goes," and she read the following verses:

The Chalet of the West Wind.

"Wind of the West, Wind of the West,
Breathe on my little chalet.
Blow over summer fields,
Bring all their perfume yields,
Lily and clover and hay.

"Bring all the joys of spring,
Soft-kissing zephyrs bring,
Peace of the mountains and hills,
Waken the columbine,
Stir the sweet breath of pine,
Hasten the late daffodils.

"Gentle Wind from the Isles of the Blest,
Breathe on my little chalet,
Fill it with music and laughter and rest;
Fill it with love and with dreams that are best;
Breathe on it softly, sweet Wind of the West,
Breathe on my little chalet."

There was certainly nothing very remarkable about the little song, and yet it had caught the

eye of the real estate men as having a certain quality which would attract people to that sunny mountainside whereon were perched the quaint Swiss chalets they desired to sell. There was a subtle suggestion to the buyer that he might find rest and happiness in this peaceful home. The piney air, the flowers and the sunshine had all been poetically but quite truthfully described. With a picture of the "Chalet of the West Wind" on the opposite page, people of discerning tastes, looking for summer homes, would surely be attracted.

"How ever did you happen to write it, Molly?" they asked her after re-reading the poem and admiring it with friendly loyalty. "Have you ever been to the mountains?"

"No," she answered, "I actually never have. But something in me that wasn't me wrote the verses. They just seemed to come, first the meter and then, gradually, the lines. I can't explain it. I had some bad news and was afraid I would have to leave college and then the poem came. That was all. Two hundred dollars," she added,

looking at the check. "It seems too good to be true. What must I do with it?"

"Put it in the Wellington Bank to-morrow morning," answered Margaret promptly.

Between them, Mrs. Markham and Mrs. O'Reilly prepared a very good dinner for the girls that night, and instead of being a funeral feast it was changed into a jolly banquet. The old Queen's dinner table was restored and there was as much gay, humorous conversation as there ever had been in the brown shingled house now reduced to a heap of ashes.

Paperhangers and painters did go into the new college house on the following Monday morning and in less than ten days the dingy rooms were transformed by white woodwork and light paper. If the Queen's girls felt a little out of it at first, not being on the campus, they were too proud to admit it, and nobody ever heard a complaint from them. They had a great many visitors at O'Reilly's. Crowds of their friends came down to drink tea or spend the evening.

The President herself called one morning and had a look at the place.

In the meantime Molly had called at Miss Walker's office and informed her that she had come into a little money unexpectedly and, with the money she was earning, she would be able to pay her own board at O'Reilly's for the rest of the winter. It was only by chance that Miss Walker learned how Molly had earned this sum of money.

"Think of the child's modesty in keeping the secret from me," she said to Miss Pomeroy. "Have you seen the poem that won the prize, by the way?"

"Why, yes," answered that critical individual. "It's a sweet little thing and I suppose struck the exact note they wanted, but I assure you it's nothing wonderful."

CHAPTER XXI.

IN THE GARDEN.

"Who would have thought this place could ever blossom like the rose," exclaimed Margaret Wakefield, settling comfortably in a long steamer chair and looking about her with an expression of extreme contentment.

"It's the early summer that did it," remarked Judy Kean. "It came to console us after that brutal winter."

"It's Mrs. O'Reilly's labors chiefly," put in Katherine Williams. "She told me that this garden had been the comfort of her life."

"It's the comfort of mine," said Margaret lazily. "Watching you girls there hoeing and raking and pulling up weeds reminds me of a scene from the opera of 'The Juggler of Notre Dame,'—the monks in the cloister working among their flowers."

Molly paused in her operation of the lawn mower.

"It is a peaceful occupation," she said. "It's the nicest thing that ever happened to us, this garden, because it was such a surprise. I never suspected it was anything but a desert until one day I looked down and saw Mrs. O'Reilly digging up the earth around some little green points sticking out of the ground, and then it only seemed a few days before the points were daffodils and everything had burst into bloom at once. This apple tree was like a bride's bouquet."

"That's stretching your imagination a bit," interrupted Judy, reclining at full length on a steamer rug on the ground. "Think of the gigantic bride who could carry an apple tree for a bouquet."

"Get up from there and go to work," cried Molly, poking her friend in the side with her foot. "Here's company coming this afternoon, and you at your ease on the ground!"

"I don't notice that Margaret W. is bestirring herself," answered Judy.

"A President never should work," answered Molly. "It's her office to look on and direct."

Judy pulled herself lazily from the ground.

"I'll be official lemon squeezer, then," she said. "I will not weed; I refuse to cut grass, or to pick up sticks with the Williamses. You look like a pair of peasant fagot gatherers," she called to the two sisters who were clearing away a small pile of brush gathered by the industrious hands of Mrs. O'Reilly.

"And what do you think you are? A bloomin' aristocrat?" demanded Edith.

"If I am," answered Judy, "my noblesse has obleeged me to squeeze lemons for the party. It's a lowly job, but I'd rather do it than pick up sticks."

"Anything like work is lowly to you, Miss Judy," said Katherine.

Summer had really come on the heels of spring with such breathless haste that before they knew it they were plunged into warm weather. And nobody rejoiced more than Molly over the passing of the long cold winter. When at last the

sun's rays broke through the crust of the frost-bound earth and wakened the sleeping things underneath, it had seemed to the young girl that her cup of happiness was overflowing. Not even to Judy and Nance could she explain how much she loved the spring. One day, seizing a trowel from some tools on the porch, she rushed into the garden and began digging in the flower beds.

"You don't mind, do you, Mrs. O'Reilly?" she apologized. "I'm so glad spring is here at last that I've got to take it out in something besides book-learning."

"I'm only too happy, Miss," said the widow. "Young ladies ain't often so fond of the smell of the earth."

It was Molly who had introduced the cult of the garden to the other girls, and it was she who had first induced Mrs. O'Reilly to resurrect some garden seats from the cellar and a rustic table. Even as early as the first of May they had tea under the apple trees, and as the days grew warmer their friends found them reading and studying in the sunny enclosure.

They had no idea of the charming picture they made grouped about in their garden; nor did they dream that Mrs. O'Reilly had occasionally allowed a visitor or two to peer at them through a crack in the dining room shutters. Mrs. McLean and Professor Green were two such privileged characters one afternoon when they called at O'Reilly's to leave notes of acceptance to a tea to which they had been invited by the old Queen's circle. The invitations in themselves were rather unusual. They were little water-color sketches done by Judy and Otoyo on oblong cards. Each sketch showed a bit of the garden, and the invitations stated that on the afternoon of June second there would be tea in the Garden of O'Reilly's.

"Where is this garden, Mrs. O'Reilly?" Mrs. McLean had demanded, and the Irish woman, beckoning mysteriously, had shown them the scene through the crack in the shutter.

"Why, bless the bairns," exclaimed Mrs. McLean, gazing through the opening, while Professor Green impatiently awaited his turn. "They

might be a lot of wood nymphs disporting themselves under the trees."

Then the Professor had looked and had discovered Molly Brown, in her usual blue linen—which was probably only an imitation linen—raking grass. Judy was softly twanging her guitar. Nance on her knees beside a bed of lilies was digging in the earth, and the others were variously engaged while Edith read aloud.

The Professor looked long at the charming scene and then observed:

"It is a pretty picture. Wherever these girls go they create an atmosphere."

But he was thinking of only one girl.

Someone else had called at O'Reilly's privately and asked to see the garden.

It was Judith Blount who stood like a dark shadow against the window and peered through the crack in the green shutter. She had come on the pretext of looking at rooms for next year, but after watching the scene in the garden had hurried away.

"And I might have been with them now," she

thought bitterly, "if it hadn't been for my vile temper that Christmas Eve."

Judith had learned a good many hard lessons during the winter. She had found out that friends in prosperity are not always friends in adversity. Her old-time rich associates at the Beta Phi House had paid her one or two perfunctory calls in the room over the post-office, but the days of her leadership were over forever. Mary Stewart came often to see her and Jenny Wren was faithful, but there was great bitterness in Judith's heart and she chose frequently to hang a "Busy" sign on her door so that she might brood over her troubles alone. She grew very sallow and thin, and sat up late at night reading, there being no ten o'clock rules at the post-office. Many times Madeleine Petit, her neighbor, was wakened by the fragrant aroma of coffee floating down the hall into her little bedroom.

"If she was my daughter," Madeleine observed to Molly one day, "I'd first put her through a course of broken doses of calomel, and then I'd

put her to work on something besides lessons. Even laundry is good to keep people from brooding. If I stopped to think about all my troubles and all that is before me in the way of work and struggles to get on," she rattled along, "I wouldn't have time to study, much less do up jabots and things. But I just trust to luck and go ahead. I find it comes out all right. Mighty few people seem to understand that it makes a thing much bigger to think and think about it. I'd rather enlarge something more worth while than my misfortunes."

Molly smiled over Madeleine's philosophy.

"I mean to make friends with her next year," went on Madeleine. "She was rude to me once, but I am sorry for her because we are both going through the same struggle and I think I can give her some ideas. You may not believe me, but I always succeed in doing the thing I set out to do. College was as far off from me two years ago as Judith seems to be now——"

"It will be a fine thing for Judith if she gains a friend like you, Madeleine," interrupted Molly

warmly. "See if you can't start it by bringing her to our garden party with you next Saturday."

Molly delivered the invitations with which she had called, and giving Madeleine a friendly kiss, she hastened on her way.

But Madeleine's words were prophetic, as we shall show you in the story of "Molly Brown's Junior Days." Judith Blount was to learn much from this energetic little person and to listen with the patience of a tried friend to her stream of conversation.

Molly felt very much like embracing all her friends that day and kissing both hands to the entire world besides. A letter had come from her mother which settled the one great question in Molly's mind just then: Should she be able to return to college for her junior year and share with Judy and Nance a little three-roomed apartment in the Quadrangle near their other friends, who were all engaging rooms in that same corridor? And that very morning all doubt had

been dispelled. Her mother had written her the wonderful news:

"The stockholders of the Square Deal Mine will get back their money, after all. It seems that Mrs. Blount had some property which she was induced to hand over. I am sorry that they should be impoverished, but it seems just, nevertheless. It will be some time before matters are arranged, however. In the meantime, I have had the most extraordinary piece of luck in connection with the two acres of orchard on which I borrowed the money for your college expenses. I have just sold it for a splendid amount—enough to cover all debts on the land, including the one to the President of Wellington University, and to furnish your tuition and board for the next two years. Scarcely anything in all my life has pleased me more than this. I don't even know the name of the buyer. The land was purchased through an agent. But whoever the person was, he must have been charmed with our old orchard. It is a pretty bit of property. Your father used

to call it 'his lucky two acres,' because it always yielded a little income."

Therefore, it was with a light heart that Molly delivered invitations that afternoon to the garden party at O'Reilly's.

She had intended to shove an envelope under the door of Professor Green's office in the cloisters and hurry on, not wishing to disturb that busy and important personage, but he had opened the door himself while she was in the very act of slipping the invitation through the crack between the door and the sill.

"Oh," she exclaimed, blushing with embarrassment. "Please excuse me. I only wanted to give you this. We hope you'll come. We shall feel it a great honor if you will accept."

"I accept without even knowing what it is, if that's the way you feel," replied the Professor, smiling. "I would go to a fudge party or a picnic or anything in the nature of an entertainment, if I felt—er—that is——" the Professor was getting decidedly mixed, and Molly saw with sur-

prise that he was blushing. "That is, if the fire refugees wished it so much," he finished.

"You look a little tired, Professor," she remarked, noticing for the first time that he was hollow-eyed and his face was thin and worn, as if he had been working at night.

"My pallor is due entirely to disappointment," he answered laughing, "our little opera passed into oblivion the other night. Perhaps you would have brought it better luck if you had been with us."

"I would have clapped and cheered the loudest of all," exclaimed Molly. "But I'm so sorry. I am sure it must have been splendid. What was the reason?"

"It was just one of those unfortunate infants destined to die young," said the Professor. "I thought it was quite a neat little thing, myself, but Richard believes that the plot had too much story and it was a little—well—too refined, if I may put it that way. It needed more buffoonery of a lighter vein. It was a joke, my writing it in the first place. However, I haven't lost any-

thing but time over it, and I've gained a good deal of experience."

"I am so sorry," exclaimed Molly with real sympathy, giving him her hand. "It seems rather tactless," she said starting to leave and turning back, "to tell you about our good luck just now, but of course you knew about the Square Deal Mine, anyway."

"Oh, yes," he answered. "They are going to pay off all the creditors. An old cousin of Mrs. Blount's in Switzerland died the other day without leaving a will, and she inherits his property. It's pretty hard on her to give it up just now when she needs it dreadfully, but Richard has induced her to do it and I suppose it is right. It will take a year at least to straighten out the affair though. There is so much red tape about American heirs getting European property."

"Then, *I've* had some luck, too," said Molly, making an effort to keep the Professor from seeing how really joyously happy she was. "Some perfectly delightful and charming person has bought my two acres of apple orchard at last,

and I shall not be down at O'Reilly's next winter. I'm going to be in the Quadrangle with the others. Isn't it wonderful?"

The Professor looked at her with his quizzical brown eyes; then he shook hands with her again.

"Does it really make you very happy?" he asked.

"Oh, you can't think!" she cried. "You can never know how relieved and happy I am. I've been walking on air all day. I shall always feel that the man who bought that orchard did it just for me, although of course he has never heard of me. Some day I am going to thank him, myself."

"You are?" he asked, "and how will you thank him?"

"Why," she replied, "why, I think I'll just give him a hug. I have a feeling that he's an old gentleman."

The Professor sat down in his chair very suddenly and began to laugh, and he was still laughing when Molly sped down the corridor to the door into the court. She did not see him again

until the day of the farewell tea in the garden of O'Reilly's.

* * * And it is in the garden that we will leave our girls now, at the close of their sophomore year.

They look very charming in their long white dresses, dispensing tea and lemonade and sandwiches to the small company of guests. It is the last time we shall see the old Queen's circle as a separate group. O'Reilly's had filled the need of the moment, but the friends agreed that nothing could ever take the place of Queen's unless it were the long-coveted quarters in the dormitories behind the twin gray towers of Wellington.

There we shall find them during "Molly Brown's Junior Days," living broader and less secluded lives in the fine old Quadrangle which had always been the center of interest and influence at Wellington College and now promised to add a unique chapter to her history.